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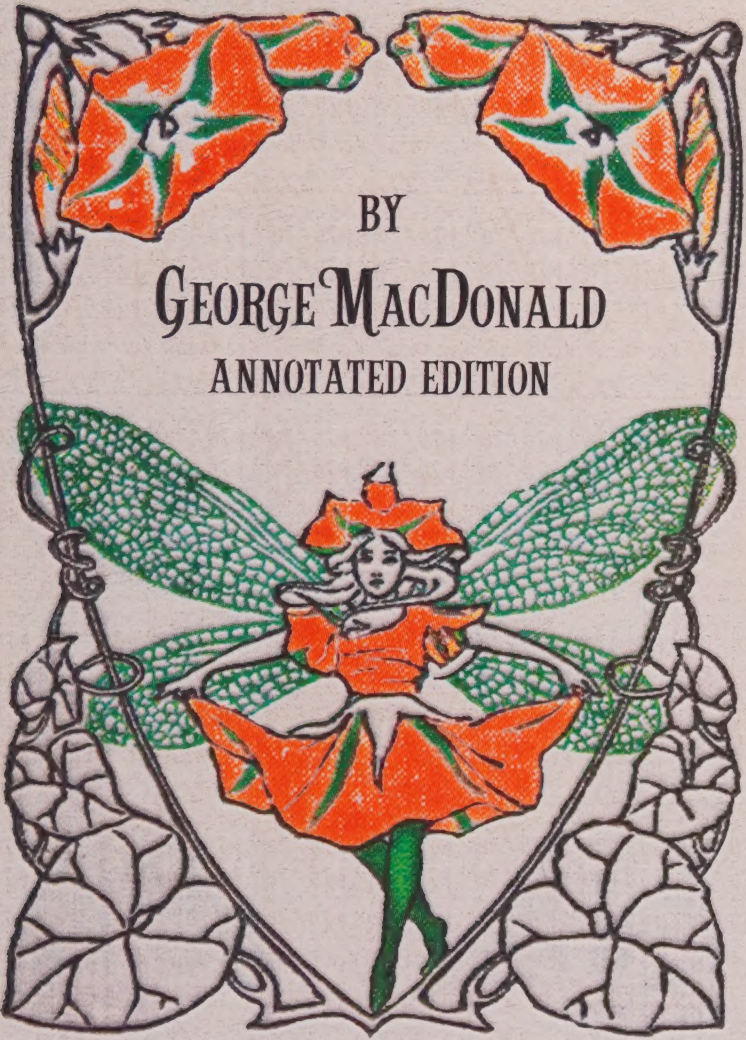

BY

GEORGE MACDONALD

ANNOTATED EDITION

EDITED BY
JOHN PENNINGTON & RODERICK McGILLIS

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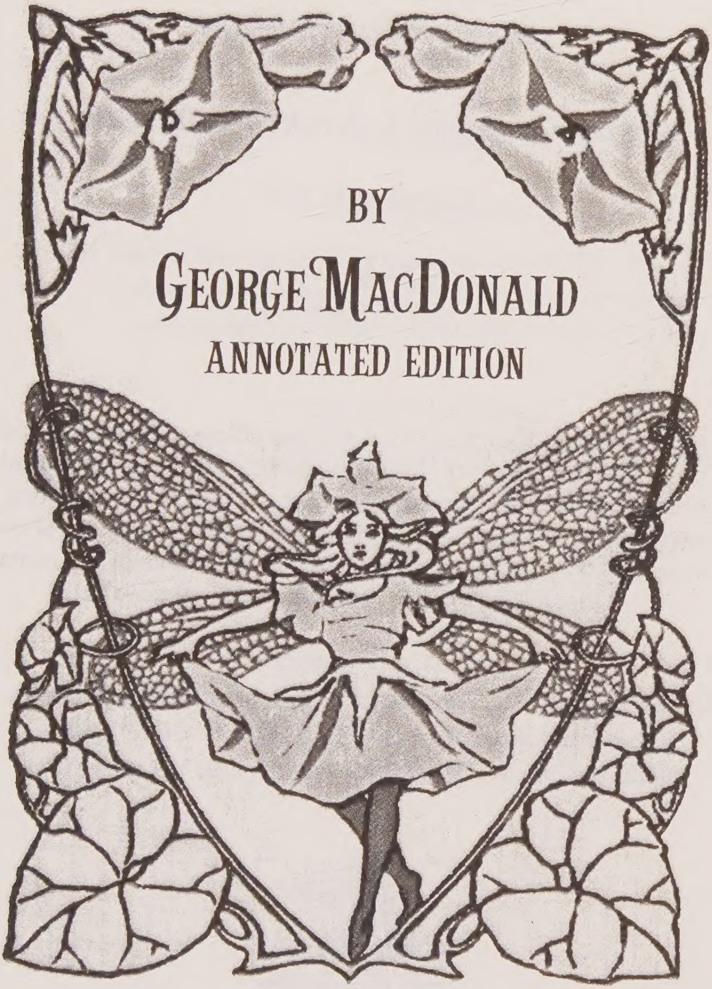

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John Pennington and Roderick McGillis, Editors

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Dedications

John Pennington:

To Karlyn Crowley, Women's and Gender Studies Professor
extraordinaire, and Ada Mae Crowley-Pennington,
who at age 7, is following in those very footsteps.

Roderick McGillis:

As always, to Frances.

George MacDonald (1824-1905)

George MacDonald was born in Huntly, Aberdeenshire, on December 10, 1824. He was the second son of George and Helen MacDonald, and he was raised on a farm not far from the village. In 1840, he attended King's College in Aberdeen and studied chemistry and Natural Philosophy, thinking he might continue his scientific studies in Germany. He could not, however, afford to pursue this plan, and he turned his attention to the study of theology. Despite a weak constitution (he was tubercular from an early age), he earned money by cataloguing the library in the North, and by teaching arithmetic during the winter of 1843 in the Aberdeen Central Academy. After graduation in 1845, with the degree of M.A., he accepted a tutorship in Fulham, where he hoped to earn enough money to repay his Aberdeen debts. In 1848, after some time working as a tutor, MacDonald entered Highbury College to study for the ministry. On completion, he accepted a call to Arundel, Sussex, in 1850, and he served there until 1853 when he left under suspicion of heretical views, which included the belief that heathens could enter Heaven—as well as animals. From this time, MacDonald made his living as a writer of poetry, fiction, sermons, children's books, and two influential adult fantasies. He became a well-known literary figure.

Many of the leading critical journals printed long articles on his work, and he was considered "one of the most popular authors of the day" (*London Quarterly Review*, 1869). During the 1860s and 1870s, MacDonald's friends included John Ruskin, Arthur Hughes, Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll), Henry Sutton, Sir Noel Paton, and F. D. Maurice, a major theologian and influence on MacDonald. In 1872, he followed Dickens and Thackeray on a lecture tour in America. He had, and continues to have, a following of enthusiastic admirers who look to him as their teacher and prophet, the most famous being C. S. Lewis. In later years he lived in Bordighera, Italy, and in 1898 he wrote a thinly disguised autobiographical story in the *Sketch*, "Far Above Rubies." This story chronicles his early difficulties. He died in Ashstead, Surrey, on December 10, 1905.

Phantastes was published in 1858 by Smith, Elder, and Co. of London.

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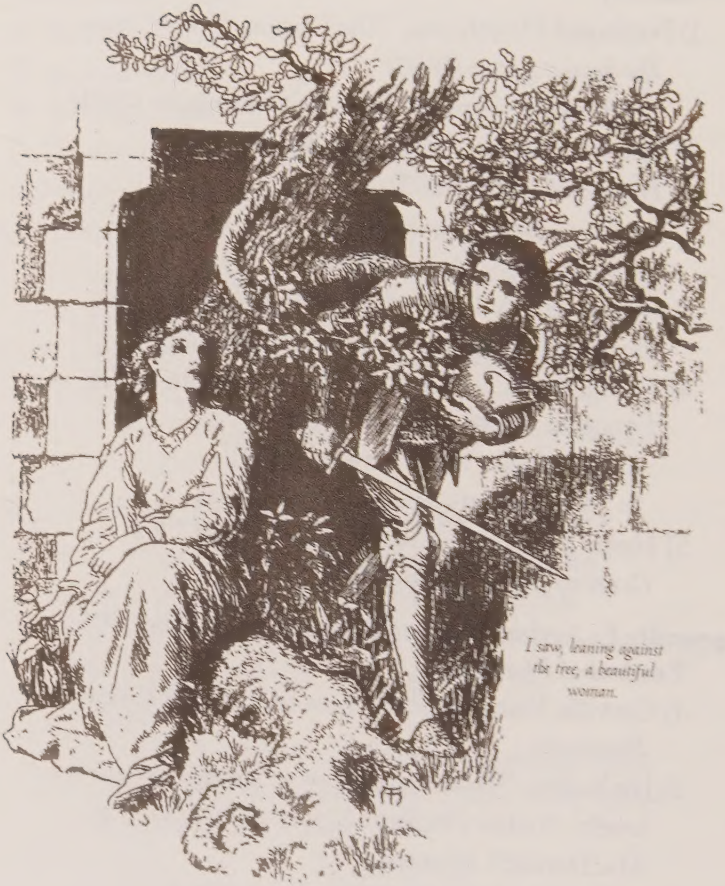

I saw, leaning against the tree, a beautiful woman.

ILLUSTRATION BY ARTHUR HUGHES (1905)

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the numerous people who have been instrumental in our creation of this scholarly edition of *Phantastes.* For two semesters, the students in the Science Fiction and Fantasy class at St. Norbert College read the fantasy novel and flagged what they thought needed annotating for students—the consensus among the students was consistent, and we think this edition of *Phantastes* is much better because of their input.

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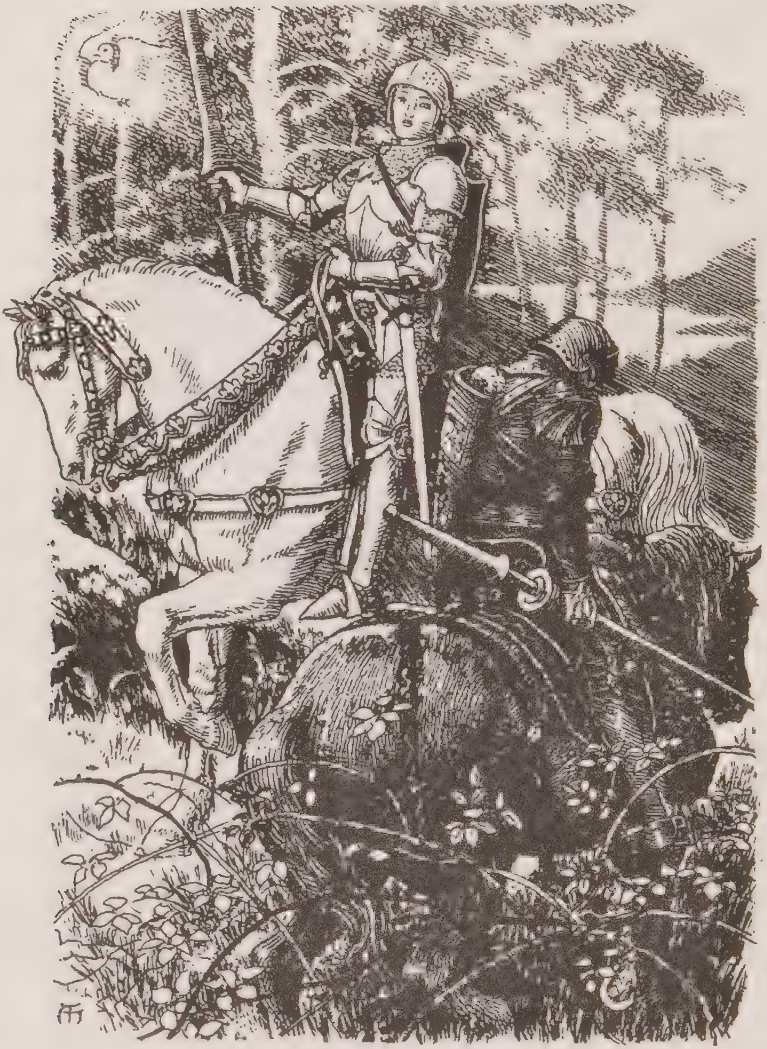
From Chapter III



"Here it chanced that upon their quest Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale rencountered in the depths of a great forest."

Illustration by Arthur Hughes (1905)

Phantastes: An Introduction

MacDonald's first two books, both in verse, received favourable reviews, but they were not financially successful, and he had a young and growing family to provide for. His publisher urged him to write fiction if he wished to make money. MacDonald, who valued poetry as the highest literary art, compromised: he wrote "a kind of fairy tale in the hope that it will pay me better than the more evidently serious work" (*George MacDonald and His Wife*, 288). This "kind of fairy tale" is *Phantastes*, a book that MacDonald claimed took him "two months to write without any close work" (*GMDW,* 290). It was published on October 28, 1858, and the immediate reaction was not encouraging. The *Athenæum* reviewer called it "an allegory in prose, which reads as though it had been written after supping too plentifully on German romance, negative philosophy, and Shelley's 'Alastor', and then instead of his having mounted his Pegasus to ride it off, he seems to have been ridden himself by a nightmare" (Nov. 6, 1858, 580). The anonymous writer also called it a "wilderness of wilderment," "a confusedly furnished secondhand symbol shop," and a "riddle that will not be read." A month after this review appeared, however, the tone of the reviews changed; articles that were, on the whole, favourable appeared in the *Spectator*, the *Leader*, the *Globe*, and the *British Quarterly Review* (see Appendix B).

By the year of MacDonald's death, 1905, the book's reputation had soared. E. S. Robertson reviewed the reissue of *Phantastes* that year; he refers to it as "one of the greatest works of pure imagination to which the Victorian era has given birth" (see Appendix B). Then in 1919, Percy Osmond praised *Phantastes* as "one of the most original books in English Literature" (*The Mystical Poets of the English Church*, 331). Perhaps the greatest tribute to *Phantastes* is that of C. S. Lewis who, in *Surprised by Joy* (1955), recounts his first reading of the book:

> The woodland journeyings in that story, the ghostly enemies, the ladies both good and evil, were close enough to my habitual imagery to lure me on without perception of a change. It is as if I were carried sleeping across the frontier, or as if I had died in the new. For in one sense the new country was exactly like the old. I met there all that had already charmed me in Malory, Spenser, Morris, and Yeats. But in another sense all was changed. I did not yet know (and I was long in learning) the name of the new quality, the bright shadow, that rested on the travels of Anodos. I do now. It was Holiness. (202)

The reference to Edmund Spenser, author of *The Faerie Queene* (1590-1596), is helpful because both Spenser's epic and MacDonald's *Phantastes* contain quests that the main characters pursue through a series of episodes in symbolic landscapes. In both works a feeling exists that Fairy Land is not, after all, confined to fiction. Spenser asks, in the proem to Book 2, why "witlesse men" should "so much misweene / That nothing is, but that which he hath seene?" If a person's senses were not so "blunt and bace," Fairy Land would be revealed. Art, for Spenser and MacDonald, is a mirror that reflects in an "antique image" the world we inhabit and the history of this world (Spenser, *Poetical Works*, 69).

Closer to MacDonald's own time, we have prose romances by George Meredith and Sara Coleridge. E. A. Baker, writing in 1939, says that *Phantastes* and Meredith's *The Shaving of Shagpat* (1856) teach "a lesson of courage and self-control" (*The History of the English Novel*, 157). The comparison with *Shagpat*, although not without relevance, is misleading. *Phantastes* is closer in atmosphere to Sara Coleridge's *Phantasmion* (1837): both have the enchanting quality of the fairy tale, variety of incident and character, simplicity of setting, and inventive situations. Still, we may give the final word on *Phantastes*'s originality to the reviewer in *The Globe*: "We know nothing with which it can be fairly compared. It is not like Fouqué's *Undine*, nor Tennyson's 'Princess'; it is not like the old tales of King Arthur's 'Round Table'; it is not like *The Faerie Queene*; nor is it like the German popular and supernatural tales, yet it is not unlike all of these" (see Appendix B).

GERMAN ROMANCE

Greville MacDonald surmises that his father first discovered the German romance writers in 1842 (*GMDW*, 72-73). In a bit of self-referencing, MacDonald has the hero of his short novel *The Portent* (1864) remark that the German romances are "a mine of wealth inexhaustible" (*The Portent and Other Stories*, 38). MacDonald's first publication, in December 1851, was a pamphlet containing translations of twelve of Novalis's *Spiritual Songs*, and *Phantastes* contains three quotations from Novalis as chapter headings. Other chapter headings come from the German writers Goethe, Fouqué, Richter, Schiller, and Heine. Unmentioned, but crucially influential, is the writer E. T. A. Hoffmann. In January of 1856, MacDonald writes in a letter: "I was quite alone, and spent the time meditating in spite of stupidity—and in reading Hoffmann's *Golden Pot* again. It is delightful" (*GMDW*, 259).

From the German romantic writers MacDonald took the idea of a world of greater reality that is immanent but only discernable by the poetic and childlike mind. Heine, in his effort to explain Romantic art in Germany, says that it tries to "represent, or rather to typify, the infinite and the spiritual, and therefore was compelled to have recourse to a system of traditional, or rather parabolic, symbols, just as Christ himself endeavoured to explain and make clear in his spiritual meaning through beautiful parables. Hence the mystic, enigmatical, miraculous, and transcendental character of the art-production of the middle ages" (*The Prose Writings of Heinrich Heine*, 77).

For MacDonald, the romance presents things in the manner of parables; speaking of Christ's manner of teaching, MacDonald says that he speaks "in subdefined, suggestive shapes, yielding no satisfactory meaning to the mere intellect" (*Unspoken Sermons: Second Series*, 41). Elsewhere he notes that the "form of the parable is the first in which truth will admit of being embodied" (*Unspoken Sermons: First Series*, 130). Both Novalis and Hoffmann depict artists as heroes in their fiction. In Hoffmann's *The Golden Pot*, the mythic land of Atlantis proves to be nothing else "but life in poetry, poetry to which the sacred harmony of all things is revealed as the most profound secret of Nature" (*Selected Writings*, 136). The poet provides access to this sacred harmony, and the poet is also a knight errant. In the poet, words become deeds.

Phantastes begins with a lengthy quotation from Novalis, dealing with the form of the romance as a "Musikalische Phantasie" (musical fantasy), made up of a medley of episodes, stories, and poems similar in form to Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. In this type of story (the *Märchen* in German), the impossible becomes possible and mortals may be immersed in a world of goblins, witches, and other strange beings. We might say this is an inner world because it takes us into the realm of psychic realities. The retreat to an inner world has been associated with escapism. Ralph Tymms maintains that the "unadult escapism" into the fairy world "all goes back to an incapacity to cope aesthetically with actual life—a regrettable trait of infantilism" (*German Romantic Literature*, 25). Yet many of those who wrote *Märchen*— Hoffmann, Chamisso, Arnim, and the others—combine imaginative exuberance with realistic detail. Their realism, however, is a subjective realism. Their great interest is in the human mind and their work is "mimetic at a mythic level" (Beer, 58). A special world confronts us in these works, a world that deals with the inner life.

MacDonald follows Novalis in the belief that through dreams and romance (in the literary sense), one achieves a vision of the ideal. The characters in such stories are stylized figures, and they operate in a world in which the demands of actual living are removed, allowing for freer expression of the basic impulses of human nature. Even if we turn to such work for escape, we are forced by the nature of the events to seek to understand our relationship to the text. We might look for escape, but we find arousal.

To Novalis and Hoffmann, the artist "was the prototype of all mankind, and was regarded as the realization of the highest human potentialities, of the progressive 'poeticization' of the world" (Tymms, 11). *Phantastes*, like *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* and *The Golden Pot*, is a *Künstlemärchen*, a fairy tale that deals with the emergence of a poet or artist. Anodos's journey takes him into the realm of the imagination, Fairy Land, where his poetic sensibility comes alive. MacDonald shows the value, indeed the necessity, of imagination, but he follows Shelley in stressing the dangers inherent in the pursuit of the image for its own sake. MacDonald is quick to seize on the implications of Shelley's *Alastor*; he focuses on the danger of "the poet's self-centered seclusion" that Shelley speaks of in the Preface to *Alastor* (*Poetical Works*, 15). The avenging spirit of Shelley's poem is the self, and in *Phantastes* the Shadow plays the same role (the "alastor"). Heinrich von Ofterdingen simply serves an apprenticeship to become cosmic laureate; he never intends to join the merchants with whom he travels. Anselmus in *The Golden Pot* is torn between the world of politics and the world of art, but his struggle is not ethical; he does not really earn his eventual removal to mythic stature. Anodos, however, must undergo a character change before achieving individuation.

ANODOS

From the outset, Anodos's romantic sensibility is clear. In Chapter I, we learn not only that the fairy who appears to him is his "two hundred and thirty-seven" year old grandmother (an echo of Lindhorst's "great-great-great-great grandmother in *The Golden Pot*), but also that Anodos desires to find Fairy Land. Later, when he wakes in Fairy Land, he discovers a "little cottage" in the woods "so built that the stems of four great trees formed its corners, while their branches met and intertwined over its roof, heaping a great cloud of leaves over it up towards the heavens." The woman of the cottage sees that Anodos has fairy blood. The barometer that measures the amount of fairy blood he has is his ability to discern the fairies in the woman's garden.

Chapter I also clarifies another thing: Anodos requires moral growth. His name indicates not only that he lacks direction, but also that he will eventually achieve self-improvement. "Anodos" comes from the Greek for pathless (*odos*) and upward (*an*). His journey may seem directionless, but it will, finally, move upwards rather than downwards. Like Heinrich von Ofterdingen, Anodos is twenty-one, and like Hoffmann's Anselmus who has just received the offer of a secretaryship as *The Golden Pot* begins, Anodos is at a crucial time just having come into land and money. Both Anselmus and Anodos are about to enter the world of business, and Anodos is on the verge of falling into the morally dubious practices that business encourages. In the book's opening paragraph, Anodos is in a "perplexity of mind," as he prepares to examine his father's papers. He is eager and vulnerable to self-delusion. Journeys in MacDonald's books are interior journeys, and here as in *Lilith* (1895), he deftly prepares the reader for Anodos's visions. The fact, related in the second sentence, that Anodos's window faces east indicates (as several references to the east throughout the fantasy also indicate) the direction his journey will take, a direction towards the rising sun, the new day, and a new beginning.

As Anodos collects his sleepy thoughts his first concern is with his "legal rights" and the lands and money he inherits. In other words, Anodos's concerns are material. The room in which his father's papers lie has long been closed and light can scarcely penetrate the gloom. The atmosphere of mystery and darkness is a catalyst to Anodos's eager curiosity, and it is no accident that the cabinet in which he finds the papers is made of oak. This old carved oak cabinet reappears in MacDonald's *Wilfrid Cumbermede* (1872) where, as in *Phantastes*, it holds the secret not only of the hero's past, but also of his identity. In each case the chest and its keys are associated with the heroes' grandmothers. The maternal, rather than the paternal past, motivates the heroes' journey. The key is the key to self-understanding; it is the "golden key" of Milton's *Comus* that "opes the palace of eternity" (*Poetical Works*, 114). The grandmother, a figure who appears in many of MacDonald's works, is the embodiment of Nature. Here is how MacDonald explains her significance in his novel, *What's Mine's Mine* (1889):

> Whatever influences us must be a person. But God is the only real person, being in himself, and without help from anybody; and so we talk even of the world which is but his living garment, as if that were a person; and we call it *she* as if it were a woman, because so many of God's loveliest influences

> come to us through her. She always seems to me a beautiful old grand mother. (212)

Inside the secretary Anodos finds the papers and some "withered rose leaves." As he sits back to meditate, a "tiny woman form as perfect in shape as if she had been a small Greek statuette" appears before him. The reference to an animated statue anticipates the later bringing to life of the Marble Lady. Anodos's first reaction is simple disbelief, but once assured that she is actually there, and there to grant a wish, he replies: "How can such a very little creature as you grant or refuse anything?" This reaction reflects the scientific cast of his mind. Earlier he had compared himself to a geologist, and he spoke of sleep "dissolving" his thoughts and then these thoughts regaining "crystalline forms" in the morning. The tiny fairy berates him: "Is that all the philosophy you have gained in one-and-twenty years?" A bit later, the woman in the oak house comments on Anodos's education and its effect to diminish the imaginative aspects of his mind. Such comments are MacDonald's criticism of contemporary educational aims and methods. Yet Anodos has yet to reveal his worst trait: his sensuality.

When the tiny fairy makes herself what we might take as normal human size, the effect on Anodos is exhilarating. She stands before him "a tall, gracious lady, with pale face and large blue eyes," and Anodos is "drawn towards her by an attraction irresistible as incomprehensible." His passion, a force he can neither understand nor control, leads him to reach out to embrace her, but she steps back with a reprimand: "Foolish boy, if you could touch me, I should hurt you," and she refers to forbidden relationships, reminding him that one cannot make love to one's grandmother. Anodos receives his first warning not to touch a lady; and he confronts two sorts of passion, the salacious and the spiritual. He looks into her eyes and his spiritual aspiration comes alive. Her beautiful blue eyes have an effect reminiscent of the blue flower in Heinrich von Ofterdingen's dream and the blue eyes of Serpentina in *The Golden Pot*. In Hoffmann's story, Anselmus looks at the elder tree and sees "a pair of marvelous blue eyes looking down at him with unspeakable desire, so that an unknown feeling" and an "intense longing" possess him (*Selected Writings*, 64). In *Phantastes*, the fairy's eyes fill Anodos with "an unknown longing" and create the impression of a maternal sea into which he sinks. The sea represents the comfort and protection of the womb and also death, the "good death" C. S. Lewis identifies in MacDonald's work. This vision contrasts to the room in which Anodos meets the fairy with its darkness and "gloomy curtains." Anodos hears a voice that assures him such a sea exists in Fairy Land. The fairy has successfully replaced Anodos's physical desire with a spiritual desire for the land of faery. Here the first chapter ends.

THE ENTRANCE TO FAIRY LAND

With the events of Chapter I in his mind, Anodos wakes to the sound of running water, signaling a revelation. The quotation from Novalis that serves as epigraph to this chapter reinforces the idea of a good death and the immersion in the primal substance. The running water comes from the marble basin that rests on a marble pedestal in Anodos's bedroom, effectively prefiguring the marble statues and pedestals in the Fairy Palace that Anodos later will visit. The bedroom also contains a dressing table of "black oak," reminding us of the oak trees Anodos encounters in Fairy Land. A footpath borders the stream and serves as a guide for Anodos, but shortly after he begins his journey he leaves this path "without any good reason, and with a vague feeling that I ought to have followed its course." This is the first of a series of errors that Anodos will commit, each one arising either from his thoughtlessness, his sensuality, or his pride.

Anodos's true course, the path by the water, is east toward light and rebirth. The direction ("more southerly"—like the Ancient Mariner) he takes leads into a dense wood in which the tree branches bar the sunlight, "forming as it were a thick grating between me and the East." This is an enchanted wood. A similar wood appears at the beginning of Book I of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, a "shadie grove"

> Where loftie trees yclad with sommeres pride,
> Did sprad so broad, that heavens light did hide,
> Not perceable with power of any starre. (Canto I, Stanza 1)

Fouqué's *Undine* contains another dangerous forest inhabited by "wonderful creatures and illusions" (6). In each case the wood is perilous to those who are weak spiritually. As in Milton's *Comus*, the inhabitants of the wood in *Phantastes* are elemental spirits that reflect psychological conflicts in the traveler. In this forest, Anodos discovers the pure lady shortly after mid-day, and the fatal woman after dark. The wood tests Anodos's resolve and his sexual purity; here he is benighted. Unlike the lady in *Comus* who keeps her "life and honour unassailed" (Milton, *Poetical Works*, 119), Anodos proves an easy mark for the temptations of the flesh.

Anodos meets a "country maiden" who utters strange words of warning. She says trust the Oak, the Elm, and the Beech trees, but be wary of the Birch and shun the Ash and the Alder trees. Anodos ignores the warning. His refusal to prepare himself for temptation will prove disastrous. The list of trees may have several sources. MacDonald certainly knew Spenser, and in the catalogue of trees at the beginning of Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser mentions the "vine-prop Elme," "the builder Oake," "the birch," "the warlike Beech," and the "Ashe for nothing ill" (*Poetical Works*, 4). Shelley's *Alastor* contains a list closer to the one in *Phantastes*. Shelley's poet flees to a dark forest where "the oak, / Expanding its immense and knotty arms, / Embraces the light beech," and where the "Ash and the acacia floating hang / Tremulous and pale" (*Poetical Works*, 24). The Alder tree, not mentioned in either Spenser or Shelley, appears in a poem by MacDonald's friend, Henry S. Sutton, "Under the Alder-Tree" (*Poems*, 17-21). The girl's mysterious characterizations of the trees and their subsequent roles in the narrative may derive from *The Golden Pot*, where Anselmus reclines under an elder tree (Anodos reclines under a beech), and hears the tree speak. MacDonald also most likely read Jacob Grimm's *Teutonic Mythology* (second edition, 1844). Clearly the trees indicate a considerable knowledge of folklore. *Teutonic Mythology* contains material on tree demons, trees consecrated to elves and wood sprites, animals, and white ladies, who inhabit mountainous regions and who often spin gold.

An oak forms the four corners of the cottage Anodos finds after meeting the country maiden, and the oak traditionally stands for hospitality, strength, virtue, and endurance. It is the most widely worshipped of trees, and from it, according to Virgil, the human race sprang. In Grimm, the oak and the beech are both sacred trees. Grimm also speaks of "wonderful maidens sitting inside hollow trees" who assist humans. The Beech tree has suitably feminine associations; dryads in Greek mythology are wedded to beech trees. The beech is also identified with literature since the earliest runes of Northern Europe were written on beech board, the source for the Anglo-Saxon "bece," "boc," or "book." Thus when Anodos escapes the Philistine Ash, he is received into the protective arms of the imagination, the feminine Beech tree. In Norse mythology the first man and woman were fashioned simultaneously from an ash and an alder, and both are connected with cruelty.

In the cabin of the four oaks, Anodos receives sustenance, information, advice, another warning, and a first glimpse of Fairy Land. His hostess is human, but she has fairy blood. This good woman is one of MacDonald's noble rustics endowed with an innate poetic nature; she is proof that rank and wealth are no criteria of worth. Throughout *Phantastes*, the traditional pastoral virtues—hospitality, sincerity, simplicity, and kindness—are evident in the common cottage dwellers. Castles and courts promote debilitating sensual pleasure. While Anodos eats his bread and milk, the woman informs him of unusual excitement in the woods. The dreaded Ash is abroad and she advises Anodos to stay the night. He refuses the invitation and shows a disinclination to discuss the matter. Instead, he reads from an ancient volume that tells the story of the Holy Grail, in this case the story of "the damsel of the alder-tree" who beguiles Sir Percivale "with her fair words and false countenance." The story prefigures Anodos's fate, and it clarifies the kind of journey he has undertaken, a journey toward maturity and spiritual purity. MacDonald's choice of Arthurian material is in keeping with the medieval atmosphere of works by Fouqué and Ludwig Tieck. But Anodos is not a medieval hero. Although *Phantastes* has affinities with the Pre-Raphaelite world of the 1850s, MacDonald does not attempt a medievalism in the manner of William Morris's *The Hollow Land* (1856).

Anodos questions his hostess about the fairies in her garden, and he learns fairies "like fun better than anything else." She also informs him of the difference between the garden fairies and those of the woods and fields; the latter have grace and simplicity, but they are uncultured. The contrast is between the genteel city dweller and the country people. Fairies are also like men and women in their unpredictable moods. Anodos concludes that communication with the fairies is "no bad education in itself." He remains, however, stuck in his human economy and offers to pay for his stay with the woman. She assures him that money is "not of the slightest use there."

MALE AND FEMALE PRINCIPLE

As Anodos makes his way into the forest, he notices strange glowworms whose light has the power to burst tiny lumps of earth into "the most gorgeously coloured sparks of every variety of hue." He soon leaves light and activity behind and fear overcomes him. He is alone and all is still. He mistakes various natural objects for humans. The vagueness of Anodos's enemy and this enemy's initial appearance as a shadow suggest the psychological nature of this experience in the forest. The shadow giant he sees is reminiscent of the giant in Goethe's *Fairy Tale* (1795); its power is in the shadow, not the substance. Anodos flees until he falls exhausted at the foot of a large beech tree. The encounter with the lady of the Beech contrasts with the previous episode with the male Ash from whom the Beech saves Anodos. The Beech Lady's love for Anodos—she willingly accepts the pain and suffering resulting from the sacrifice of her hair for his protection—prefigures the ideal Anodos must attain. The Beech Lady exhibits the essential love that triumphs over pain and loss. Ideal femininity, exemplified in Sophia in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, is eternal wisdom. MacDonald, perhaps, is remembering Heinrich's rapturous apostrophe to Matilda: "What is religion but the complete union of loving hearts? You are a manifestation of eternal love in its sweetest forms" (*Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, 131). Matilda is "the very spirit of song" and the Beech Lady's own song carries Anodos back to his childhood innocence and oneness with nature. But Anodos has not yet achieved such love and his vision of harmony is a dream from which he wakes to continue his "unfinished story." He sets out with a thoughtless remembrance of the Beech Lady's sorrow: "if she is sorry, I could not help it." Vaguely feeling that he ought not to leave her, he walks on.

THE MARBLE LADY—A VISION OF ART

The forest animals avoid Anodos. As he admires the "flower of a parasite," a white rabbit approaches and looks at him just as he "had been looking up at the flowers." The connection between parasite and Anodos goes without comment. When Anodos stoops to lift the rabbit, it scampers off. Anodos's fairy nature has been activated and he finds himself back on the path by the stream. Soon he comes across a bush-covered cave. The cave is a frequent symbol in Romantic literature, serving as both womb and tomb. Here it is akin to Shelley's cave of wisdom and inspiration. Shelley's Witch of Atlas dwells in a mountain cave, and MacDonald's Marble Lady dwells in a rocky cell, the mouth of which "is overgrown with shrubs and creeping plants." Inside the Witch's cave is a fountain; inside Isis's cell is a well. Anodos drinks from the well, and the water activates his poetic faculty. Anodos now discerns a beautiful marble lady encased in a nearby block of alabaster. This is the Romantic lady who symbolizes the poet's soul. For example, the poet in *Alastor* dreams that a "veiled maid / Sat near him, talking in low solemn tones, / Her voice was like the voice of his own soul" (*Poetical Works*, 18). Anodos's Marble Lady is Isis, and she is most likely derived from Novalis's *Hyacinth and Rosebud* (1798). Isis is both poetry and the goddess of nature.

This marble Isis, when Anodos first sees her, is the dead form of beauty. Anodos believes he has discovered the Platonic ideal behind the material and has only to render this ideal visible. He gives the lady the kiss of life, but she is no Sleeping Beauty and he must find another way. He thinks of Orpheus, the epitome of poets who could move stones and lead trees by the power of his song, and he decides to trust in his poetic talent. For Novalis, Orpheus is the emblem of all poetry; at one with nature, he communicates with beasts, rocks, and flowers. Orpheus humanizes nature. His song is love. Orpheus is the poetic form of Christ. In *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34), Thomas Carlyle notes that "our highest Orpheus walked in Judea, eighteen hundred years ago" (223).

But another aspect of the Orpheus figure is doubtless on MacDonald's mind at this point. Orpheus was a failure who contravened instruction and lost his love, Eurydice. Anodos, MacDonald's aspiring Orpheus, continually fails to obey instruction. He is a slave to his passions. Anodos sings and animates the Marble Lady, but his song testifies to his false motives; his "passionate need" to see the lady come alive impels him into a self-enclosed world of art that is heedless of the outside world. The lady comes to life, but she disappears into the forest leaving the "voiceless longing" in Anodos's heart.

FALSE ART

Anodos has glimpsed the image; the poetic victory was within reach only to slip away into the fairy forest. Anodos begins a quest for the lost image. Shortly, he meets a knight who resembles Sir Percivale. The knight's armour is covered with rust, an outer embodiment of his inner state. With a quick eye, he sees that Anodos is a poet, and he stops to warn him of the Maiden of the Alder who ensnares and unmans proud and thoughtless youths. Anodos is complacent, and soon finds himself absorbed in the beauty of the forest and his search for the Marble Lady. As night approaches with its symbolic darkness, Anodos sinks into the pleasures of the forest. The sounds of birds and the scent of the woods lull him. He sings a song addressed to the "Queen of night." The song raises the possibility of an assignation, of an illicit love taking advantage of the darkness. The song has an unexpected efficacy; it conjures the Maid of the Alder, the beauty as femme fatale. Hearing a "low delicious laugh," Anodos sees a "dim white figure" beside a nearby thicket. "Delicious" suggests appetite and the thicket suggests a maze or web, the "leafy labyrinth" of *Comus*. This woman has "the sweetest voice," and her beauty is "too plenteous." In his usual manner, Anodos does not heed such warnings. Nor does he mind her imperatives, "Push aside the branches" and "Go in." The Alder maiden seduces Anodos with her beauty and with her strange tale. What has happened is that Anodos has fallen victim to the worship of "false Art" (see E. S. Robertson, Appendix B)—art beautiful in form but devoid of content. The beautiful lady is hollow, and like Spenser's Duessa incredibly ugly. Anodos wonders, "How beauty and ugliness dwell so near?" He is quick to idealize form without reference to truth and morality, and like the young aristocrats in MacDonald's *Seekers and Finders*, his unpublished and now destroyed novel, he looked "upon Beauty as if manifested for its own sake and his own sake" (see *GMDW*, 320). As a result, he loses his power of communication with nature. He is once more an outsider.

FROM INNOCENCE TO EXPERIENCE

Anodos comes across a farmhouse on the borders of Fairy Land. Once again the woman of the house has fairy blood, and she understands Anodos. She calls him a "boy" and a "child" to emphasize his immaturity and impetuosity. Anodos reveals his prejudices concerning rank, and a continuing inability to see beyond surface appearances when he registers surprise that this woman shows "such superiority to her apparent condition." Her husband balances her; he is a jolly representative of the empirical mind that "cannot believe" anything beyond the five senses. His favourite word is "sensible," and he readily confesses he has been too busy to explore Fairy Land. Besides, what else is Fairy Land other than "trees and trees, till one is sick of them." Anodos begins to doubt that Fairy Land exists until he sees the farmer's little girl. As before, the males—the farmer and his son, "an ill-looking youth"—represent a life of no nonsense, hard work, attention to business and custom. The females, the farmer's wife and daughter, represent a world of "wonderment and longing," excitement and active participation in the marvelous. Both this episode and the earlier one in the cottage of the four oaks are pastoral interludes. Anodos's worldly wisdom confronts rustic simplicity. The pastoral art "is the art of the backward glance, and Arcadia from its creation the product of wistful and melancholy longing" (Marinelli, 9). A recurring theme in MacDonald's novels is the juxtaposition of city and country life.

The tree motif returns when Anodos happens upon "a long, low hut, built with one end against a single tall cypress." The cypress is an emblem of dejection. Anodos has found the house of negation. Inside sits a woman who, like Spenser's Despair, woos her unsuspecting visitor to her doctrine of negativity; she is a sophist. As usual, Anodos is his own worst enemy, and he desires to investigate a closet close by the woman; this desire only grows stronger when she prohibits him from opening the door. He opens the door and finds his Shadow, the avenging demon, or Alastor of Shelley's poem. The Shadow here is the inverse of the shadow in Adelbert von Chamisso's *Peter Schlemihl* (1814), in which Peter sells his shadow to the devil and then spends his time trying to reclaim it. Anodos tries to rid himself of his Shadow. Another source may be Dickens's *Little Dorrit* (1855-57). In Chapter XXIV of that novel, *Little Dorrit* tells Maggie the story of a Princess who wandered into the woods where she found a cottage "in which there was a poor little tiny woman" who spent her time spinning. The Princess knows the tiny woman's secret that she keeps a shadow hidden in her cottage. This shadow is the spirit of a departed lover who is finally reunited with the tiny woman when she dies (see Crago, 90-96 and Appendix D). Both *Peter Schlemihl* and *Little Dorrit* are plausible sources for *Phantastes*, but MacDonald would most likely have read Fouqué's version of Chamisso's story, *The Mandrake* (1814), in which an imp in a vial torments its owner by procuring all that he desires. A similar theme appears in Hoffmann's *The Story of the Lost Reflection* (1815).

Each of these tales is a variant of the *doppelgänger* theme. MacDonald takes his cue from Hoffmann and makes his double the projection of the unconscious. The secondary personality that psychologists of the early nineteenth century identified in abnormal states of consciousness was often thought to be "an almost entirely wicked counterpart of the normal self, and seemed to be identical with the bad self which traditionally lurks within, as a hostile principle" (Tymms, 42). The Shadow is reminiscent of Los's Spectre in Blake's *Jerusalem*, a "bleck'ning Shadow" that lures Los "by argument of science and by terrors" (Blake, *Complete Writings*, 624-625). The Shadow in *Phantastes* is Anodos's dark self, the embodiment of values that MacDonald opposed—scientific analysis taken too far and sexual aggressiveness.

In finding his Shadow, Anodos has moved from innocence to experience. He has entered a period of doubt and despair that MacDonald outlines in "A Sketch of Individual Development." The quotation from Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode" that serves as heading for Chapter IX clarifies MacDonald's meaning (See Appendix C). Is there no objective reality other than darkness? Is the supernatural world merely the product of the human imagination? Is there no reality beyond the self? Anodos, the poet, must learn that truth is something immutable. The Shadow, on the other hand, is the analytical faculty that dispels poetry and renders life cold and indifferent. The Shadow is the opposite of the Venus Genetrix; it withers the grass upon which it reclines and shrivels flowers, and even darkens the sun.

Anodos next encounters a "lovely fairy child," also called "the fairy-gifted poet" who holds in his hands two tubes, one through which he "beheld the same thing everywhere; the other through which he looks when he combines into new forms of loveliness those images of beauty which his own choice has gathered." The child has an aureole round his head. Anodos is pleased with the child, but then his Shadow surrounds the child and turns him into a "commonplace boy." The toys he carries are scientific objects that play with light. Shortly after this encounter, Anodos comes across the knight of the rusty armour and sees that through action this knight has regained his honour and self-respect. The knight has learned the truth of MacDonald's dictum: "bethink thee of something thou oughtest to do, and go and do it, if it be but the sweeping of a room, or the preparing of a meal, or a visit to a friend. Heed not thy feelings. Do thy work" (*Unspoken Sermons*: First Series, 178). Anodos is, at first, eager for this friendship but soon his Shadow darkens the Knight with suspicion and Anodos departs.

He now begins to rely on his Shadow to "disenchant the things around me." He is the arch realist who takes each thing at its face value. The effect of such a doctrine is a hopeless despair that at its worst can result in suicide as in the case of Charley Osborne in *Wilfrid Cumbermede*. In *Phantastes*, Anodos's pride in his Shadow turns to loathing when he sees the manner in which cynicism works on others. He meets a child-maiden who carries a "small globe"—the globe of poetry and faith emitting radiant colours and beautiful sounds. This globe breaks into a "black vapour" when the Shadow touches it.

A brief interlude ensues in which Anodos's libido is aroused only to be thwarted by the weird spatial perspective that causes ridiculous confusion in a strange town he has entered. Unless correct distance is maintained between people, they appear grotesque as if reflected in a carnival hall of mirrors.

Resuming his journey, Anodos crosses a wasteland peopled by "goblin-fairies" who mock him by offering him gold and jewels. He has abandoned hope and rejects the offer. A similar episode occurs in *Undine* when Huldbrand sees numerous goblins in an enchanted forest "making sport with silver and gold" (46). Another stream appears. Water has directed Anodos's journey since the first chapter. It has variously stood for the dream life after death, maternal comfort, a poetic elixir, and the Biblical water of life. Anodos follows the stream until it leads him into a place filled with roses, and he feels as if he has entered Fairy Land for the first time. The longing for eternal value returns and he wishes to see the Spirit of the Earth. The return of the poetic instinct revives him, and, like the poet in *Alastor*, he finds a "little boat." This little boat also echoes boats in Wordsworth's *Peter Bell* and Shelley's *Witch of Atlas*, and it represents the imagination. Henry Sutton's poem *Wilford Boat* (1848) also has a boat that takes the poet to an enchanted isle where he experiences "High poetic gleams and fancies" (Sutton, 83). The boat in *Phantastes* is passive; it floats at the mercy of the stream. As he floats along, Anodos meditates on the nature of art and truth. His meditation floats over the significance of reflections and mirrors, and he marvels at the manner in which these create beauty out of the commonplace, and even out of pain.

THE PALACE OF PHANTASY

Anodos's boat of imagination takes him to the inner chambers of the mind where he finds a Palace of Phantasy, an allegorical castle of the brain. This is the domain of art like Yeats's Byzantium, and as Anodos approaches "some strange melodious bird" takes up its song. The Palace consists of white marble and it contains many galleries and rooms and passageways. MacDonald, in the heading to chapter XI, provides one source for the Palace. He quotes lines 836-842 from Book II of Wordsworth's *The Excursion*:

> A wilderness of building, sinking far
> And self-withdrawn into a wondrous depth,
> Far sinking into splendour—without end:
> Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,
> With alabaster domes, and silver spires,
> And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
> Uplifted.

The Palace proves to be a pleasure dome, a place of music, dance, sculpture, and a library of romantic tales. Other sources are Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" (1816) and Hawthorne's "The Hall of Fantasy" (1843).

Moonlight is a feature of the Palace. When Anodos arrives moonlight bathes the Palace; after swimming in a basin he finds inside he can discern "gracious forms" more clearly in the moonlight, and throughout the Palace "silver seemed everywhere preferred to gold."

Later in *Phantastes*, when Anodos is a prisoner in a tower, the moon releases him. As soon as her rays fall on him the walls of the tower vanish. The moon appears to represent mercy as well as imaginative creativity.

TWO STORIES

In the Palace library Anodos reads a variety of books, and he recounts two of the stories. The first, a large part of which is in verse, describes a land that seems to precede life in this world. It is a dull, leaden place in which water casts no reflection and desires remain forever frustrated. Women differ from men in that they have colourful wings instead of arms, and they swim in the sea while men rarely do. The story illustrates the sterility and frustration of an existence that denies the libido. Not only is sexual contact unheard of, but even oblique mention of sex causes umbrage among the women. At least one woman goes to desperate measures to purify herself— she commits suicide. MacDonald sees an important role for sexual love, and his warning in *Phantastes* is simply that such love should be guided by spiritual love.

The second story directly comments on the rest of the narrative. This is the story of Cosmo von Wehrstahl, a story reminiscent of E. T. A. Hoffmann's stories with the inter-penetration of real life and dream life. MacDonald's delineation of grotesque and eccentric characters is Hoffmannesque. The owner of the antique shop is confusingly male or possibly female, similar to Hoffmann's eponymous character, Ritter Gluck (1809).

Anodos and Cosmo are virtually identical. Both are poets "without words," both are at crucial stages of their life, and both must learn to break out of the charmed circle of their own "house of life." Cosmo, like Anodos, has untapped imaginative potential. He lives in a world of dreams. His room is at the top of one of the town's highest houses (the poet's tower) where none of his fellow students have ever been. In his lonely tower-like room with his new mirror, Cosmo muses on the relation of the mirror image to art and he yearns to live in the reflected room. That room, however, proves a prison the true poet must break. It imprisons the White Lady. Magic mirrors appear in Fouqué's *The Magic Ring* (1825) and *Headmaster Rhenfreid* (1826). In the first of these tales, Berta see her phantom-double, bespattered with blood, appear in the mirror, and in the second Nordenholm, intent on learning the whereabouts of his beloved Agnes, makes a magic mirror that retains "the moon's beams in such a manner as to exhibit by secret reflection on the surface everything that passes upon the earth's sphere in succession" (*Great German Short Stories*, 544). Another mirror of this sort appears in Hoffmann's "Adventures of a New Year's Night" (1816). Here the narrator sees the form of his love Julie in a mirror. The mirror that reflects something that is not materially present indicates the early nineteenth century's interest in what later became known as the unconscious. In the Classical-Christian view, the mirror "could represent the unio mystica of man's soul and the spirit of God that each man mirrors" (Salamon, 625).

The lady Cosmo sees dressed in white is a counterpart to Anodos's Marble Lady; both visions of the artist are locked within the confines of art. Cosmo's lady is "more like marble than a living woman." She is a goddess of beauty, and Cosmo worships her. He hardly dares to lie on the bed less it be "sacrilege." She comes at twilight, just as the church bells chime six o'clock. Passion takes hold of Cosmo; his love has "ripened, or—*withered* into passion." MacDonald does not denigrate passion; it can be beneficial when it ripens into pure love and bears fruit, or it can manifest itself in lust and jealousy. Passion in the latter sense is a power that keeps people apart and impedes communication. Cosmo's passion is, at first, destructive, and he applies his knowledge of magic to bring the lady to him. He regards her as a possession. She comes but tells him she is a slave of the mirror and can only be free if he breaks the glass. Cosmo fails to do this; he loses consciousness and suffers a brain fever. Later realizing his error he smashes the mirror and dies knowing his love is reciprocated.

THE GALLERY OF ART

Anodos now begins to sense that the Fairy Palace teems with unheard music. He finds a gallery of marble images. His artistic power returns and each day he finds more "entrancing verses" coming to him. In addition to his own music, Anodos hears "the distant sound of multitudes of dancers." Soon he finds a hall filled with an assembly of white marble statues above which shine the words "TOUCH NOT," the same interdict as earlier in the cave. Anodos desires to see the statues animated, but each night when he hears dancing, he fails to catch sight of the dancers before they have hurried back to their pedestals. Premeditation will not work. Creation, for MacDonald, is at least partially spontaneous, and when "the right moment and the impulse coincided" Anodos darts into the hall to find his lost Marble Lady still and cold on her pedestal. Anodos now refers to her as "my Isis," and he tries in vain to conjure a song to bring her to life once more.

The Marble Lady is, as noted earlier, ideal beauty or soul's beauty (the "naked seraph," in Shelley's words). She has the power of the muse, and reacting to her, Anodos sings. The "statue appeared to grow." Anodos's song is erotic, warning the reader that Anodos has not purified his passion; rather the heavy stresses and monosyllabic words give the song an expectant and breathy note. The poet watches with "fascinated eye" as the veil that covers the body slowly rises. Once the veil lifts to reveal the body, Anodos impetuously embraces the statue "in defiance of the laws of the place." The vision, however, is beyond embrace. Like Novalis's blue flower, the statue creates a great longing in the poet, a longing only satisfied in death. In this world, "too much light, too many words, too much revelation, blinds or stupefies" (*The Seaboard Parish*, 40). The Marble Lady is the ideal, the poetic image, the work of art as envisaged by Romantic poets which is

> utterly original and not in the old sense "imitated"; "concrete," yet fluid and suggestive; a means to truth, a truth unrelated to, and more exalted than, that of positivist science, or any observation depending upon the discursive reason; out of the flux of life, and therefore, under one aspect, dead; yet uniquely alive because of its participation in a higher order of existence, and because it is analogous not to a machine but to an organism, coextensive in matter and form, resistant to explication. . . . (Kermode, *Romantic Image*, 44)

In his Preface to Karl Emil Franzos's novel *For the Right* (1887), MacDonald states that the ideal is the end of art, as it must be in life, and that fiction must not merely give "a reflection, as in a mirror"; rather art, like this pure White Lady, should provide a revelation of truth, and by truth MacDonald refers to the reality that transcends the world of sense. Malcolm, the fisherman hero of *The Marquis of Lossie* (1887), discusses the Isis figure and Novalis's *Märchen* with the painter Lenorme. There must be, he says,

> Revelation before mystery. I take it that mystery is what lies behind revelation, that which as yet revelation has not reached. You must see something—a part of something, before you can feel any sense of mystery about it. The Isis forever veiled is the absolutely Unknown, not the Mysterious. (*The Marquis of Lossie*, 117)
>
> The work of art must hold a mystery and yet allow a glimpse into the infinite. Isis must remain a goddess and must appear that "she knows oh! so much, if only she could make you understand it!—that she is all there for you, but the all is

> infinitely more than you can know" (*The Marquis of Lossie*, 118).

Anodos again proves unworthy of the vision and it slips from his grasp. Defying another injunction—"No one enters here without the leave of the Queene"—he follows the White Lady through a door and finds himself "on a waste windy hill" with stones "like tombstones" all about. He has entered the wasteland of the soul. His path leads underground down a "sort of natural staircase." This spiral staircase has a fixed point. The stairs may lead up or down, but either direction brings the climber to the same point. Looking up, Anodos sees the stars and looking down he sees "the reflection of the same stars." At the bottom of this underground passage Anodos enters a kind of Inferno; he experiences self-rebuke in the shape of a host of grotesque fairy devils who mock him and burlesque his reverent attitude to the White Lady, even singing the very song that he had sung. These Kobolds taunt him mercilessly and tell him the lady is meant for a better man. Anodos instinctively accepts the claim of this better man, and "instantly" the Kobolds let go of him and open a passage for him to depart. Still, he has much to learn; he continues to feel "proud" of his power to awaken the statue, and he feels a sense of "property" in relation to her.

The underground world of the goblins and witches is a recurring feature of German romance: Fouqué's *Undine*, Tieck's *The Faithful Echart* and *The Tannenhauser* (1799) are examples. The hideous wood woman in Tieck's *The Runenberg* (1804) may have inspired the ugly woman Anodos meets underground. In any case, the episode is inescapably Freudian. As Anodos proceeds the passageway becomes smaller until he is compelled "first to stoop, and then to creep" on hands and knees. He has returned to the womb. Finally, the passageway opens on a wide sea that has uterine implications. The sea is "wintry" in appearance only. The sea, sky, and surrounding rocks are gray, cold and dismal, and Anodos summons the courage to face death as he plunges into the water which revives him with "the kiss of a mother." The sea recalls the maternal sea of chapter 1 and the security of the Beech Lady. Anodos has chosen to act courageously, and instead of death he finds himself in the process of rebirth. A gaily-coloured boat appears. This boat is a kind of coffin, symbolic of the "good death" that results in "more life." The Alder Maiden was also a coffin, but she represented death-in-life, not the apocalyptic death that reveals more and better life. As he floats covered with a "purple cloth," he sees in the depths of the waters his whole past, and this vision calms his soul and brings a comforting sleep. From the depth of despair Anodos finds hope in memories of the past and dreams of future happiness.

SPIRITUAL BEAUTY

A small, flat island rests in the middle of the sea, and on it is a cottage. Here Anodos will experience Purgatory after the Underground Inferno. He notices many flowers, and his heart "overflowed in a sad, tender love" for them. He is learning. In the cottage is an old woman, MacDonald's maternal divinity who is very old and very beautiful. This woman represents a beauty deeper than the merely physical, a spiritual beauty that exacts a pure response. True to MacDonald's handling of symbol, she is the maternal spirit of nature and also the spirit of poetry and imagination who spins songs. She is sage or prophet who reveals to Anodos his future path.

THE BALLAD OF SIR AGLOVAILE

One of the songs the old woman sings tells of the knight Sir Aglovaile. The song is another attempt, like the story of Cosmo earlier, to impress upon Anodos the necessity of selflessness in love. The close association of poet and knight, present throughout *Phantastes*, emphasizes the fact that the poet must be active, make his poetry live in his own life. The poetic act is an act of love, and while it leads inwards to imagination, it also leads out of the self in an act of self-renunciation.

Ostensibly, Sir Aglovaile is Pre-Raphaelite in its medieval cast with archaisms such as "he yode," "little recked," "woe will betide," and "full bitterly." The atmosphere of death, night, and the graveyard gives the poem an ominous note that emphasizes the central theme of destructive passion. Sir Aglovaile rides one moonlit night into a graveyard and sees a ghost of a woman whose beauty fills him "with longing sore." The ghost warns Anodos that things easily go wrong. We learn that she was once the knight's lover, but he had seduced and abandoned her. She bore a child, but she and the child died shortly after childbirth. Death has purified her, but the knight feels no remorse. Instead, he seeks to have her again. She gives the familiar warning: "do not touch me." Ghost and knight sit amid the tombstones through the night, not touching. They continue in rapture for many days until the knight succumbs to his passion and clasps the ghost to him. He holds "the corpse of the maiden pale." The artist, or in this case the knight, will lose the vision should he profane the image. He who, like Orpheus, is not perfect in faith and love, will lose everything.

THE FOUR DOORS

The cottage has four doors, each of which Anodos enters in turn in the process of his psychic cleansing. The first door is the Door of Weeping. Anodos steps through it into his own past and relives one of the traumatic incidents of his childhood: the death of his brother. Anodos has deep feelings of guilt arising from the circumstances of his brother's death. The event serves to explain why Anodos had in the past "wearied" himself "seeking for rest." He now learns to accept death and parting as part of life, to see the power of love and the use of sorrow, and he takes courage from the song of the old woman who sings of love's permanence.

The second door is the Door of Sighs and it opens into the room of a lady who resembles the Marble Lady. As it turns out, it is that very lady and she is waiting for that better man, the knight Anodos has met twice before. The knight arrives, and he and the lady speak of Anodos, noting that he had nobleness. Seeing them together humbles Anodos. He understands the sanctity of love, and on his return to the cottage the old woman's song reinforces the moral. Anodos leaves this experience "loving the white lady as I have never loved her before."

Next is the Door of Dismay. Passing through it, Anodos finds himself in a busy street where he meets a girl he had loved when he was an adolescent. She brings memories of "Wrong and Sorrow." Escaping from these unhappy memories, he makes his way to a chapel above the burial-vault of his ancestors, and here he meditates on the nobility of death and his own paltry existence. A hand and a kiss from out of the darkness comfort him, and he understands that "the pangs of death are the throbs of life."

Each door has brought a deeper insight into life, and after a sleep Anodos is eager to pass through the fourth door, the Door of the Timeless. He bursts from the couch and through the door too late to heed the old woman's cry not to go there. Through the door lies eternity, and Anodos is unready to experience eternity. The final mystery is only available in "lofty death." Anodos's dash into the future results in the waters of eternity engulfing the island, and the old woman exhorts him to leave and "do something worth doing." He has yet to act, to make his life purposeful.

THE FIGHT WITH THE GIANTS

Anodos soon approaches a "lonely tower" from which he hears the "clang of an anvil." Two athletic young brothers greet him at the door. They are preparing for battle with three giants, and they expect Anodos to be their comrade in arms and serve them "in present song, and in future deeds." Work and song go together here. The Knight and the poet are one and the same. Only work will inspire Anodos to sing. Here Anodos learns of the efficacy of work, and also the satisfactions of comradeship.

The giants arrive unexpectedly. Interpretation of the incident along with its source in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* is provided by MacDonald in a sermon titled, "True Christian Ministering." In the sermon, MacDonald writes:

> So with the Christian man; whatever meets him, obedience is the thing. If he is told by his conscience, which is the candle of God within him, that he must do a thing, why he must do it. He may trouble from head to foot at having to do it, but he will tremble more if he turns his back. You recollect how our old poet Spenser shows us the Knight of the Red Cross, who is the knight of holiness, ill in body, diseased in mind, without any armour on, attacked by a fearful giant. What does he do? Run away? No, he has but time to catch up his sword, and, trembling in every limb, he goes on to meet the giant; and that is the thing that every Christian man must do. (*A Dish of Orts*, 309)

This is exactly what Anodos and the two brothers do. The three giants die in combat, but so do the two brothers. After slaying his giant—"the first worthy deed of my life"—Anodos, yet again, feels so proud that his Shadow returns.

THE TOWER

Dressed in splendid armour, Anodos enters an enchanted forest, his spirits wonderfully elated, and he reflects on the recent battle with such pleasure that he has to remind himself that he killed only one giant. He compares himself to Sir Galahad. As these thoughts pass through his mind, a resplendent Knight approaches. The language here, as with the Alder Maiden earlier, signals danger. As the Knight comes closer, Anodos notices that this is his double, another form of the Shadow. This alter ego on a horse leads Anodos to a "dreary square tower" in which he locks him with his Shadow. The tower, as the retreat of the contemplative who communes with higher things, finds its most influential embodiment in Milton's *Il Penseroso* (1645/46). Milton finds nothing harmful in this nightly seclusion in a lonely tower, but the tower takes on a different aspect in Coleridge's "To

William Wordsworth" (1817). Here it is the "dread watchtower of man's absolute self" (*Poetical Works*, 405). For MacDonald the tower suggests the poet's isolation in art. Anodos has entered the tower of selfhood, and only he can break from this self-imposed prison. To be free is to annihilate the self for the good of others. Anodos only need open the door and exit the tower. This he does after hearing a marvelous song that arouses sensations of all the maternal associations earlier in the book. The song is like "a living soul, like an incarnation of Nature . . . like a caressing bird . . . like a sea . . . like a long draught of clear spring-water . . . like essential sunlight . . . like a mother's voice and hand."

Drawn by the song, Anodos leaves his prison. The singer is the little girl (now a "beautiful woman") whose globe Anodos had broken long before. Her experiences are a paradigm for the attainment of vision. The poet, who can be anybody, must pass through doubt and misfortune. The young girl suffered, but her suffering has taught her she has no need for the globe Anodos broke; it was a childish crutch, and she has attained a more precious childlikeness: she is herself a poem. For MacDonald, as for Shelley, "The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own" (*A Defence of Poetry*, 40). Poetry in MacDonald keeps moving beyond aesthetic experience to something higher; the "poetic is only the outer beauty that belongs to all inner or spiritual beauty" (*Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood*, 154).

Encountering the little girl, now grown, reminds Anodos of his "lowly" status. No resplendent knight, he doffs his armour and his pride and sets his course eastward with no heroic pretensions. He sets out to be "a doer of his work." His Shadow disappears for the last time.

WOODEN MEN

Anodos suddenly hears a man singing. It is the "knight of the soiled armour" who now hauls a dragon behind his horse. The dragon is another version of the grotesque Ash and Alder trees. The singing knight again associates song and service. Anodos offers himself as squire to the knight and the two travel together. As they go, the knight relates the story of the little girl who gathered a pair of wings for herself, and of the opposition of the wooden men. The wings the little girl begs from butterflies and moths are the wings of imagination. The child and the poet are the same. The wooden men are the inhuman, inflexible and robot-like creatures that make up the world of Dombeyism, masters of business and industry. With no eyes, noses or ears, they are blind to any form of beauty and immune from the death strokes of the knight's sword. Their desire is to assert rather than to create. They are slaves to their own senseless motivations and juxtaposed with the little girl they illustrate MacDonald's maxim: "The real slave is he who does not seek to be a child . . . who cleaves to the traditional authorized service of forms and ceremonies" (*Unspoken Sermons*, Third Series, 87-88).

SUCCESS IN DEATH

The next episode concerns a strange religious ritual that sublimates some terrible evil. Anodos and the knight enter a settlement where ominous activity is taking place. The clearing with its avenues, walls and battlements is a combination of chapel and fortification. Along two sides of the fortification are "three ranks of men, in white robes, standing silent and solemn, each with a sword by his side, although the rest of his costume and bearing was more priestly than soldierly." Authority and dogma, force and fanaticism, suggest the tyranny of fear. Besides these soldier-priests the place contains "a company of men and women and children, in holiday attire." This crowd appears hypnotized. A sense of reverence fills the space and a ceremony begins. Six white-robed men escort an acolyte to a dais upon which sits a figure who exudes "a mixture of pride and benignity." Anodos notices that the youth shrinks in terror before he is pushed through a trap door. The others, including the knight, are too enthralled to notice. Anodos knows something is wrong, and he is correct. The figure on the throne proves nothing more than a wooden image. Those escorted to the throne are innocent victims of an insidious sacrificial rite. The people worship "a great brute, like a wolf," a projection of the death impulse. Northrop Frye explains the purpose of such sacrifice: it is "the Selfhood's desire to do what the imagination wants to do, enter into communion with God; but the Selfhood's god is Satan or death, and it can only make that god appear by killing somebody" (*Fearful Symmetry*, 398). This episode gives us MacDonald's idea of State Religion. Its god is a god of fear, uniformity, and death. Anodos discerns the evil, reveals the treachery, and receives death for his iconoclasm.

Anodos's action is seemingly futile, but it is noble, and in death he finds contentment. He experiences undreamed of blessedness and integration with Nature. He lives in the bosom of the earth and feels "the great heart of the mother beating" into his own. He rises into a primrose that the lady he once loved plucks. The flower withers, and Anodos floats on a cloud through eternity. He has learned that "it is by loving, and not by being loved, that one can come nearest to the soul of another."

THE RETURN

A "writhing as of death" comes over Anodos, and he returns to the "more limited" bodily life on earth. His psychic adventures have purified him. He now feels "a power of calm endurance" to which he had "hitherto been a stranger." He now lives with a great optimism and denial of evil, and with the conviction that "a great good is coming." *Phantastes* ends with the assurance that "what we call evil, is the only and best shape, which, for the person and his condition at the time, could be assumed by the best good." The book's final words—"And so, *Farewell*"—signal not a goodbye, but rather an exhortation.

ASSESSMENT

Phantastes is a young man's book with a young man's optimism. Like the Pre-Raphaelites, MacDonald reacts against the coarseness of the industrial world, but he does not escape into art. Like Coleridge, Shelley, and other Romantic writers, MacDonald sets out to inspire. This world is always the touchstone even in the most extravagant flights of fantasy. Much of MacDonald's language and symbolism derives from these Romantic writers: the veiled lady, the boat of imagination, the shadow, the mirror, the sea, the tower, the cave, and such words as "float" and "irresistible longing." MacDonald's symbols are purposefully vague. They work through what MacDonald calls "poetic suggestiveness" (*Unspoken Sermons*, First Series, 120). The quotation from Novalis at the beginning of *Phantastes* warns the reader not to look for coherence in the romance; as in dreams, symbols can slip from our understanding and change their significance. Thus the White Lady can represent art, nature, and the divine while she is a statue, and later she is nothing more than mortal and feminine. The Shadow is at times the rational spirit, and at times the spirit of pride and selfhood. Such slipperiness accounts for the difficulty of symbolic writing. But this difficulty is deliberate: "A genuine work of art *must* mean many things" (*A Dish of Orts*, 317). The artist need not define or explain his or her work. The work of art that needs, MacDonald says, "This Is A Horse" written under it is not a successful work of art (317).

The various episodes and tales in *Phantastes* repeat the same themes, but the book avoids monotony by the inventiveness of

MacDonald's imagination. The encounter with the Ash, Cosmo's story, and the religious ritual at the end differ in style, yet they all convey mystery and tension. The story of the little girl who gathers wings is delightfully comic, and the story of the planet of ungratified desire is funny and suitably macabre. *Phantastes* is a book that can fascinate, and also reward close reading. In it, MacDonald found a personal style, but the times called for realism in fiction and MacDonald would turn to children's stories to explore this style. *Phantastes* inaugurates a period in Victorian literature rich in fairy lore and fantastic creations, especially in writing for the young.

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George MacDonald: A Brief Chronology

1824	Born 10 December at Huntly, Aberdeenshire.
1826	MacDonald family moves to The Farm, Huntly.
1832	Death of MacDonald's mother, Helen MacKay MacDonald.
1840	Enters King's College, Aberdeen. MacDonald recalls his college days in the poem, *A Hidden Life* (1864).
1842	Spends time away from college, possibly at Thurso Castle in the north of Scotland.
1845	Receives AM (MA) degree from King's College, with emphasis on chemistry and the natural sciences.
1846	Publishes his first poem, "David," in the *Congregational Magazine.*
1848	Attends Highbury Theological College, London; engaged to Louisa Powell.
1850	Assumes the pastorate at Arundel, Sussex. Marries Louisa Powell; private publication of his translation of Novalis, *Twelve of the Spiritual Songs of Novalis.*
1852	Lilia Scott MacDonald born.
1853	Resigns pastorate in Arundel, West Sussex, England, over heresy charge; death of his brother Alexander; birth of the MacDonalds' second child, Mary Josephine MacDonald.
1854	Caroline Grace MacDonald born. MacDonald resides in Manchester.
1855	MacDonald's first book, the poetic drama *Within and Without* published; death of MacDonald's sister Bella.
1856	Spends winter in Algiers (with financial assistance from Lady Byron); birth of Greville MacDonald.
1857	*Poems* published; birth of Irene MacDonald. MacDonalds live in Hastings.
1858	*Phantastes* published; deaths of MacDonald's father, George MacDonald, Sr., and of his brother, John Hill; birth of Winifred Louisa MacDonald.

1859	Moves to Tudor Lodge, Regent's Park; MacDonald assumes Professorship at Bedford College.
1860	Death of Lady Byron; birth of Ronald MacDonald.
1862	Meets Lewis Carroll around this time; birth of Robert Falconer MacDonald.
1863	*David Elginbrod* published*;* meets Mrs. LaTouche and John Ruskin—Ruskin would have a tortured relationship with Mrs. La Touche's daughter Rose; MacDonald counseled Ruskin.
1864	*Adela Cathcart* and *The Portent* published; birth of Maurice MacDonald.
1865	Spends summer in Switzerland; *Alex Forbes* published; receives lectureship at King's College, London; birth of Bernard Powell MacDonald.
1867	*Dealings with the Fairies*, *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood*, *Unspoken Sermons* (First Series), and *The Disciple and Other Poems* published; moves to the Retreat, Hammersmith (where William Morris eventually resided and renamed Kelmscott House); birth of George MacKay MacDonald.
1868	*Guild Court*, *Robert Falconer*, and *The Seaboard Parish* published; MacDonald receives LL D from Aberdeen University.
1869	Takes sea voyage on *The Blue Bell* (cut short because of a painfully swollen knee); begins friendship with F. D. Maurice.
1870	MacDonald becomes editor of *Good Words for the Young; The Miracles of Our Lord* published; Louisa MacDonald publishes *Chamber Dramas for Children.*
1871	*Works of Fancy and Imagination* (10 volumes), *At the Back of the North Wind*, and *Ranald Bannerman's Boyhood* published.
1872	Begins lecture tour in the United States and Canada; *The Princess and the Goblin*, *The Vicar's Daughter*, and *Wilfrid Cumbermede* published.
1873	*Gutta Percha Willie* published.

1875	*Malcolm* and *The Wise Woman* published.
1876	*Thomas Wingfold, Curate*; *Exotics* (translations); and *St. George and St. Michael* published.
1877	First public performance of *The Pilgrim's Progress; The Marquis of Lossie* published; MacDonald receives Civil List Pension.
1878	The MacDonalds winter at Porto Fino, Italy; death of Mary Josephine MacDonald.
1879	*Paul Faber, Surgeon* and *Sir Gibbie* published; death of Maurice MacDonald.
1880	*A Book of Strife: The Diary of an Old Soul* published.
1881	*Mary Marston* published; MacDonalds adopt two children, Honey and Joan; move to Casa Corraggio, Bordighera, Italy.
1882	*Castle Warlock*, *Weighed and Wanting*, *Orts*, and *The Gifts of the Christ Child* published.
1883	*Donal Grant*, *A Threefold Cord*, and *The Princess and Curdie* published.
1885	*The Tragedie of Hamlet* and *Unspoken Sermons* (Second Series) published.
1886	*What's Mine's Mine* published.
1887	*Home Again* published; an earthquake damages Bordighera (MacDonald mentions this in his novel *A Rough Shaking*, 1890).
1888	*The Elect Lady* published.
1889	*Unspoken Sermons* (Third Series) published.
1890	*A Rough Shaking* (MacDonald's last work for children) published.
1891	*There and Back*, *The Flight of the Shadow*, and *A Cabinet of Gems* (selections from the work of Sir Philip Sidney) published; death of Lilia Scott MacDonald.
1892	*The Hope of the Gospel* published.
1893	*Poetical Works* (2 volumes), *Heather and Snow*, *Scotch Songs and Ballads*, and *A Dish of Orts* (revised edition of *Orts*) published.
1895	*Lilith* published.
1897	*Rampolli*, *Growths from a Long Planted Root* (translations), and *Salted with Fire* published.

1898	"Far Above Rubies," in *The Sketch*, is MacDonald's last published work.
1900	MacDonald retires to Haslemere, England.
1901	MacDonalds celebrate Golden Wedding Anniversary.
1902	Death of Louisa MacDonald; buried at Bordighera, Italy.
1905	Death of George MacDonald at Ashtead, Surrey; buried at Bordighera, Italy.

Notes on the Text

Edward Stanley Robertson in "A Literary Causerie: Phantastes," published in *The Academy* on March 31, 1906 (see Appendix B), begins the essay as follows:

> How long is it since I first read "Phantastes"? My own old copy bears the date 1858, and I believe it is an *edition princeps*. But it is not the copy in which I read the Faerie Romance first—that was lent me by a friend. The date matters very little, except that it was very near the first publication of the book.
>
> And now I find myself in possession of the most recent edition, issued by the author's son, Dr. Greville MacDonald, and illustrated by the author's friend, Arthur Hughes. I hope I am not ungrateful, but though I admire Mr. Hughes's illustrations, on the whole, I prefer my own old plain copy. Methinks the reader should illustrate his "Phantastes" for himself; the mental picture is better than the material one. But this is probably an instance of that troublesome abstraction, the personal equation.

Robertson highlights a concern that readers of Victorian novels often encounter—what version of a text is the most reliable, the most authoritative? Does Charles Dickens begin *Oliver Twist* as follows?

> Among other public buildings in a certain town, which for many reasons it will be prudent to refrain from mentioning, and to which I will assign no fictitious name, there is one anciently common to most towns, great or small: to wit, a workhouse; and in this workhouse was born; on a day and date which I need not trouble myself to repeat, inasmuch as it can be of no possible consequence to the reader, in this stage of the business at all events; the item of mortality whose name is prefixed to the head of this chapter.

Or does it begin in this way?

> Among other public buildings in the town of Mudfrog, it boasts of one which is common to most towns great or small, to wit, a workhouse; and in this workhouse there was born on a day and date which I need not trouble myself to repeat, inasmuch as it can be of no possible consequence to the reader, in this stage of the business at all events, the item of mortality whose name is prefixed to the head of this chapter.

"It depends," is the answer. It depends on whether you are using the Oxford University Press edition, which does not mention the name of the town, or the Penguin edition, which boldly names the town Mudfrog.

Though Dickens claims that some details may have "no possible consequence to the reader," we as literary students and scholars understand that having an authoritative text is of great consequence, especially in a digital age where poems, novels, short stories, dramatic works, and essays are conveniently found online. There is no guarantee, however, of the reliability of these texts, which are often scanned and translated into a variety of documents—zipped files, pdfs, plain text, etc. Thus an authoritative text—often called a critical edition—provides students and scholars with a reliable text that allows one to feel confident about the text one is using for critical reading and interpretation. In *A Handbook of Literary Research* (eds. Simon Eliot and W. R. Owens, Routledge, 1998), W. R. Owens writes in "Editing Literary Texts" that "the preparation of reliable, scholarly texts is one of the most valuable tasks a literary scholar can undertake. Both general readers and professional literary critics concentrate on texts, and their work of interpretation or evaluation will be gravely damaged if these are corrupt or imperfect. The more detailed a critic's attention to the words of the text, the greater the need for textual accuracy" (62). Owen highlights critic F. O. Matthiessen's interpretation of Herman Melville's novel *White Jacket* (1850): Matthiessen takes pains to analyze the importance of the description "soiled fish." Unfortunately for Matthiessen, the publisher or printer induced an error—for Melville had written "coiled fish." The lesson here is that an unreliable text could soil your interpretation!

Phantastes was published in 1858 by Smith, Elder, and Co. in London and reflects the original intent of George MacDonald. There is no indication that MacDonald oversaw revised editions of his works, even though there were many editions during his lifetime, many of them unauthorized editions printed in America. Greville MacDonald edited a commemorative edition in 1905, which includes illustrations by Arthur Hughes, though George never saw those illustrations. In fact, Greville identifies three reasons for his edition: 1) to "rescue" the work from an unauthorized edition illustrated by John Bell (George disliked the illustrations, Greville reports) and to secure copyright; 2) to "pay a small tribute" to his father; and 3) to make the fantasy novel appeal to more readers by including Hughes's illustrations. See Greville's Preface in Appendix E on illustrations. A central critical issue revolves around what edition to use as the definitive one: the first edition of 1858 or the 1905 edition that was edited by a loving son that also included illustrations not ever seen by George.

We believe that the 1858 edition is the closest we have to George MacDonald's original intent for *Phantastes*. By using the 1858 edition as the foundation for this critical, authoritative edition, we believe that readers will most closely experience what MacDonald intended and what Victorian readers would have experienced reading the novel for the first time mid-century.

We compared the 1858 and 1905 editions and have highlighted below any major changes between the editions. We have standardized spaces between punctuation, eliminating multiple spaces between periods, semi-colons, and exclamation points to conform with standard publishing practice today. We also corrected the places where semi-colons were placed inside quotation marks, which was not—and is not—standard practice.

Most of the changes that the 1905 edition makes deal with use of commas, with Greville cutting out many. We retain MacDonald's use of commas, except where there is a clear mistake (i.e., when a comma appears between the subject and verb or at the end of a sentence). We retain George's commas because one could argue that George, who started his writing career as a poet, was sensitive to the rhythm of sentences—he used commas (and to a lesser degree semi-colons) to guide the reader.

For the critical edition, we did standardize a few particulars, some of which come from the 1858 version, while others from the 1905 one:

> **Grey**: We use *grey*. The 1905 edition uses *gray* throughout, while the 1858 edition uses *grey*. *Grey* is the common spelling in Great Britain, while *gray* is common to America. One wonders if Greville used an American edition as the basis for his edition.
>
> **Fairy Land**: The 1858 edition is inconsistent early in the text about identifying the fantasy land Anodos encounters. About half-way through the novel George uses *Fairy Land* to identify the world, so we use this variation throughout the text as the proper noun, which is what the 1905 edition does.
>
> **Nature**: In a few places George uses *nature* when referring to this proper noun. In some place he capitalizes. We use *Nature* for the proper noun, which mirrors the

1905 edition, and also mirrors how many Romantic writers (e.g., Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, all key influences on George) referred to the term.

Beginning Quotations: Each chapter begins with a quotation or quotations from literary sources. In the 1858 edition George does not put these passages in quotation marks, and he uses italics to identify the works. In the 1905 edition, Greville uses quotation marks and puts passages in italics, but not the titles of the works. We follow the 1858 version.

Hyphenated Words: Both versions are fairly inconsistent with hyphenated words. The 1858 edition will use *fire-side*, for example, while the 1905 one will use *fireside*; in turn, the 1905 version will use *good-bye*, while the 1858 one will use *goodbye*. Because there is no way to determine any conscious attempt to "correct" spelling or word use, we follow the 1858 edition's use of hyphenated words.

Punctuation in Interpolated Poems: *Phantastes* is filled with interpolated, original poems, many of them being dramatic dialogues. We follow George's use of punctuation to identify speakers.

Punctuation to Introduce Quotations: George uses dashes more than colons to introduce dialogue, while Greville deleted dashes for colons. We retain George's punctuation again, for it reflects the common practice of punctuation of the mid-nineteenth century, which also included the use of double punctuation at times (e.g., :—).

Below are the major differences between the 1858 edition and the 1905 one. We go with the 1858 version unless noted. When needed we provide a brief explanation for the editorial choice that we made.

1858 Edition	**1905 Edition**
Chapter 1	
p. 5: "low fog"	"low bog"
fog makes more sense in context	
Chapter 3	
9: "she came right towards me"	"she came direct towards me"
11: "expect some sort of food"	"expect to find some sort of food"

1858 Edition	**1905 Edition**
15: “to see these beings?”	“to see these things”
16: patronize	patronise
17: “sauntering hither and thither”	“sauntering hither or thither:
“hither and thither” is a correct usage	
Chapter 4	
24: “earthly pallet”	“earthly pellet”
“pallet” makes more sense	
Chapter 5	
37: “I sat down”	“I saw down”
37 “I recal it”	“I recall it”
“recal” clearly an error—we use 1905 version	
38 “form induing”	“form enduring”
“induing” is correct use	
Chapter 6	
41: “open place”	“open space”
42: “as it befel to him”	“as it befell to him”
“befel” is correct and mirrors the Knight’s courtly speech	
47: “hands and fingers”	“the hand and the fingers”
no reason to believe only one hand is used	
Chapter 8	
61: “realize to myself”	“realise to myself”
Chapter 9	
66: “our own land”	“our land”
Chapter 10	
72: “ran in a single channel”	“ran into a single channel”
“ran in” makes as much sense as “ran into”	
74: “eaten and drunk”	“eaten and drank”
“eaten and drank” not proper use	
Chapter 11	
77: “This fairy bath”	“The fairy bath”
78: “clear as the round”	“clear as a round”
“the round” makes more sense	
78: “my own room”	“my room”

1858 Edition	1905 Edition	
80 and 81: "rhyme"	"rime"	"rhyme" more appropriate in context
Chapter 12		
82: "connexion"	"connection"	"connexion" common British spelling
Chapter 13		
99: "as if awakening from a dream"	"as if from a dream"	
101 no added line	"who lives, he dies; who dies, he is alive"	line not in 1858 edition—we do not know if George added line
101: "every one of her heart-throbs"	"any one of her heart-throbs"	
Chapter 15		
121: "failing race"	"falling race"	"falling" makes more sense—we use 1905 version
Chapter 17		
129: "somerset"	"sommersault"	"somerset" more British term for forward roll
130: "everything would look!"	"everything would look?"	Anodos appears to make a claim, not ask a question
Chapter 18		
134: "embodiment"	"imbodiment"	both have same meaning
Chapter 19		
140: "in a summer night"	"on a summer night"	"in" is incorrect—we use 1905 version
140: "Soothe"	"Sooth"	to calm makes more sense than to find the truth
142: "I well might know"	"I might well know"	"well might" fits setting better
145: "the second door"	"the door"	
146: "winter"	"the winter"	
Chapter 20		
155: "untill"	"until"	"untill" is correct in Spenser quotation

1858 Edition	1905 Edition	
158: “but he, alas; was so crippled”	“but he, alas! was so crippled”	exclamation point correct—we use 1905 version
161: “sympathize”	“sympathise”	both are correct spelling
Chapter 21		
164: “develope”	“develop”	“develope” alternative spelling
165: “incumber”	“encumber”	both words are correct
167: “form, that lay”	“form that lay”	comma mistake—we use 1905 version
168: King	king	lower case more consistent - we use 1905 version
Chapter 22		
174: “looked up to me”	“looked at me”	
Chapter 23		
177: Spenser	Matthew Roydon	Roydon correct citation—we use 1905 version
177: “Gospell”	“Gospel”	“Gospell” is correct in Roydon poem
182: “knee or elbow-joint”	“knee- or elbow-joint:	“knee-“ more consistent—we use 1905 version
186: “those crowding behind push him in”	“pushed him in”	“push” seems more likely intent
Chapter 24		
189: Decker	Dekker	Dekker is correct—we use 1905 version
191: “the being beloved by each other”	“the being loved by each other”	
192: “hope unto your hearts”	“hope into your hearts”	“unto” seems correct
Chapter 25		
194: “I cannot yet answer”	“I cannot answer yet”	

Notes on the Annotations

The annotations for this edition serve multiple readers: students, scholars and teachers, and the average reader. We provide two types of annotations:

CLARIFICATION NOTES

These notes provide definitions for obscure words or clarifications of abstract and confusing passages. We consulted the *Oxford English Dictionary* for word definitions because the *OED* provides the historical tracing of a word's development and usage over time. We repeat notes in various places if we sense that readers need to be reminded of an annotation since most readers will not refer back to an earlier note.

CONTEXTUAL EXPLANATIONS

The second kind of notes provide contextual background information—related to the nineteenth-century, particularly in England. In addition, since MacDonald is foundational to the development of modern and contemporary fantasy, we provide connections to contemporary writers, including C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, Philip Pullman, and J. K. Rowling.

Our annotations, finally, are primarily reader generated. John Pennington, who teaches a class called Science Fiction and Fantasy at St. Norbert College, Wisconsin, had his students read *Phantastes* and "flag" words and passages that they thought needed clarification. Over 70 students in two separate classes participated in this assignment—the students, remarkably, were quite consistent with their suggestions. We know that this edition is much more user-friendly because of this student involvement.

PHANTASTES:

A FAERIE ROMANCE.

Phantastes from "their fount" all shapes deriving,
In new habiliments can quickly dight.

FLETCHER'S *Purple Island*[1]

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[1] Phineas Fletcher (1582-1650), *The Purple Island; or, The Isle of Man* (1633), a 12-canto allegorical poem structured on the human body and mind, influenced by Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* (1590; 1596), which was one of MacDonald's favorite poems and key influence on *Phantastes*. MacDonald added "their fount" to the line (some 1858 editions of *Phantastes* contain the spelling error *fonnt*). The original line reads: "*Phantastes* from the first all shapes deriving, / In new habiliments can quickly dight;"

Es lassen sich Erzählungen ohne Zusammenhang, jedoch mit Association, wie Träume, denken ; Gedichte, die bloss wohlklingend und voll schöner Worte sind, aber auch ohne allen Sinn und Zusammenhang, höchstens einzelne Strophen verständlich, wie Bruchstücke aus den verschiedenartigsten Dingen. Diese wahre Poesie kann höchstens einen allegorischen Sinn im Grossen, und eine indirecte Wirkung, wie Musik haben. Darum ist die Natur so rein poetisch, wie die Stube eines Zauberers, eines Physikers, eine Kinderstube, eine Polter-und Vorrathskammer.

Ein Mährchen ist wie ein Traumbild ohne Zusammenhang. Ein Ensemble wunderbarer Dinge und Begebenheiten, z. B. eineMusikalische Phantasie, die harmonischen Folgen einer Aeolsharfe, die Natur selbst.

* * * * *

In einem echten Mährchen muss alles wunderbar, geheimnissvoll und **[un]**zusammenhängend sein; alles belebt, jeder**[s]** auf eine andere Art. Die ganze Natur muss wunderlich mit der ganzen Geisterwelt gemischt sein ; hier tritt die Zeit der Anarchie, der Gesetzlosigkeit, Freiheit, der Naturstand der Natur, die Zeit vor der Welt ein. . . . Die Welt des Mährchens ist die, der Welt der Wahrheit durchaus entgegengesetzte, und eben darum ihr so durchaus ähnlich, wie das Chaos der vollendeten Schöpfung ähnlich ist.

—NOVALIS. ***See Appendix A***

PHANTASTES:

A FAERIE ROMANCE FOR MEN AND WOMEN.

By

George Mac Donald[2]

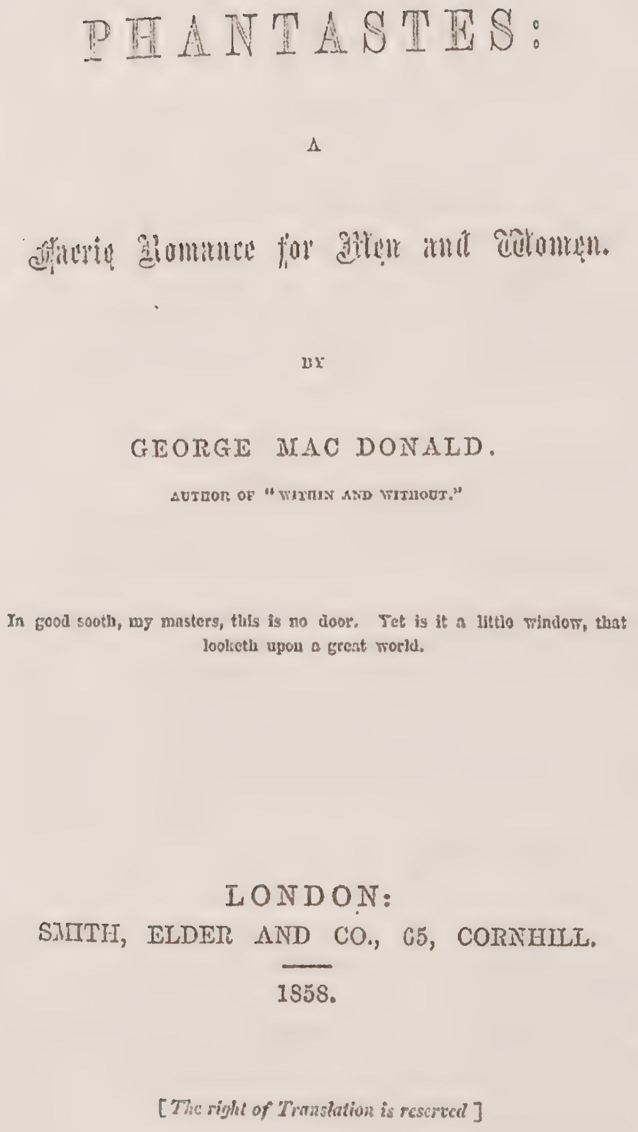
Author of "Within and Without."

> In good sooth, my masters, this is no door. Yet is it a little window, that looketh upon a great world.[3]

---

[2] *Mac Donald* appears with a space between the "c" and the "d," a spelling that commonly was accepted, as was *Macdonald.* Robert H. Boyer and Kenneth J. Zahorski use the "Mac Donald" spelling in *The Fantastic Imagination: An Anthology of High Fantasy* (Avon, 1977), one of the earliest collections devoted to fantasy stories. They included "The Light Princess," and, of course, the title of their anthology comes from MacDonald's "The Fantastic Imagination" (1893), which was originally published with an edition of "The Light Princess."

[3] Line by MacDonald. On an interesting note, Daniel H. Overton in "Nature Through a City Backyard" in *House and Garden* (Dec. 1910) tells of an artist friend who used this quotation for a kindergarten program where the artist created a window opening out of a library. Overton uses this quotation to ponder how his backyard is such a window that leads to wonder.



PHANTASTES:

A

Faerie Romance for Men and Women.

BY

GEORGE MAC DONALD.

AUTHOR OF "WITHIN AND WITHOUT."

In good sooth, my masters, this is no door. Yet is it a little window, that looketh upon a great world.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.

1858.

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Chapter I

A spirit . . .

. . . . . .

The undulating woods, and silent well,
And rippling rivulet, and evening gloom,
Now deepening the dark shades, for speech assuming,
Held commune with him; as if he and it
Were all that was.

SHELLEY'S *Alastor.*[1]

I awoke one morning with the usual perplexity of mind which accompanies the return of consciousness. As I lay and looked through the eastern window of my room, a faint streak of peach-colour, dividing a cloud that just rose above the low swell of the horizon, announced the approach of the sun. As my thoughts, which a deep and apparently dreamless sleep had dissolved, began again to assume crystalline forms, the strange events of the foregoing night presented themselves anew to my wondering consciousness. The day before had been my one-and-twentieth birthday. Among other ceremonies investing me with my legal rights,[2] the keys of an old secretary,[3] in which my father had kept his private papers, had been delivered up to me. As soon as I was left alone, I ordered lights in the chamber where the secretary stood, the first lights that had been there for many a year; for, since my father's death, the room had been left undisturbed. But, as if the darkness had been too long an inmate to be easily expelled, and had dyed with blackness the walls to which, bat-like, it had clung, these tapers[4] served but ill to light up the gloomy hangings, and seemed to throw yet darker shadows into the hollows of the deep-wrought cornice.[5] All the further portions of the room lay shrouded in a mystery whose deepest folds were gathered around the dark oak cabinet which I now approached with a strange mingling of reverence and curiosity. Perhaps, like a geologist,[6] I was about to turn up to the light some of the buried strata[7] of the human world, with its fossil remains charred by passion and petrified by tears. Perhaps I was to learn how my father, whose personal history was unknown to me, had woven his web of story; how he had found the world, and how the world had left him. Perhaps I was to find only the records of lands and moneys, how gotten and how secured; coming down from strange men, and through troublous times, to me who knew little or nothing of them all.

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[1] A quest poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) published in 1816. The full title is "Alastor: or, the Spirit of Solitude." MacDonald quotes lines 484-488 in which the Poet encounters his soulmate. Shelley's poem is a major influence on *Phantastes*, and Shelley's Preface to "Alastor" offers a nice gloss on MacDonald's fantasy. "The poem entitled 'Alastor' may be considered as allegorical of one of the most interesting situations of the human mind. It represents a youth of uncorrupted feelings and adventurous genius led forth by an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic, to the contemplation of the universe. He drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge, and is still insatiate. The magnificence and beauty of the external world sinks profoundly into the frame of his conceptions, and affords to their modifications a variety not to be exhausted. So long as it is possible for his desires to point towards objects thus infinite and unmeasured, he is joyous, and tranquil, and self-possessed. But the period arrives when these objects cease to suffice. His mind is at length suddenly awakened and thirsts for intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself. He images to himself the Being whom he loves. Conversant with speculations of the sublimest and most perfect natures, the vision in which he embodies his own imaginations unites all of wonderful, or wise, or beautiful, which the poet, the philosopher, or the lover could depicture."

To solve my speculations, and to dispel the awe which was fast gathering around me as if the dead were drawing near, I approached the secretary; and having found the key that fitted the upper portion, I opened it with some difficulty, drew near it a heavy high-backed chair, and sat down before a multitude of little drawers and slides and pigeon-holes.[8] But the door of a little cupboard in the centre especially attracted my interest, as if there lay the secret of this long-hidden world.[9] Its key I found. One of the rusty hinges cracked and broke as I opened the door: it revealed a number of small pigeon-holes. These, however, being but shallow compared with the depth of those around the little cupboard, the outer ones reaching to the back of the desk, I concluded that there must be some accessible space behind; and found, indeed, that they were formed in a separate framework, which admitted of the whole being pulled out in one piece. Behind, I found a sort of flexible portcullis[10] of small bars of wood laid close together horizontally. After long search, and trying many ways to move it, I discovered at last a scarcely projecting point of steel on one side. I pressed this repeatedly and hard with the point of an old tool that was lying near, till at length it yielded inwards; and the little slide, flying up suddenly, disclosed a chamber—empty, except that in one corner lay a little heap of withered rose-leaves, whose long-lived scent had long since departed; and, in another, a small packet of papers, tied with a bit of ribbon, whose colour had gone with the rose-scent. Almost fearing to touch them, they witnessed so mutely to the law of oblivion,[11] I leaned back in my chair, and regarded them for a moment; when suddenly there stood on the threshold of the little chamber, as though she had just emerged from its depth, a tiny woman-form, as perfect in shape as if she had been a small Greek statuette roused to life and motion.[12] Her dress was of a kind that could never grow old-fashioned, because it was simply natural: a robe plaited in a band around the neck, and confined by a belt about the waist, descended to her feet. It was only afterwards, however, that I took notice of her dress, although my surprise was by no means of so overpowering a degree as such an apparition might naturally be expected to excite. Seeing, however, as I suppose, some astonishment in my countenance, she came forward within a yard of me, and said, in a voice that strangely recalled a sensation of twilight, and reedy river banks, and a low wind, even in this deathly room,

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[2] Although boys could legally marry at 14 and girls at 13 in MacDonald's day, the age of 21 was considered the age of entry into adulthood. At this age, a person became independent and could receive the keys to his or her abode, enter into legal contracts, and (if you were male) vote.

[3] Desk used for writing; it may have openings and drawers for papers and books.

[4] Thin candles.

[5] Ornamental molding around the wall of a room just below the ceiling.

[6] A geologist is a person who studies the make-up, structure, and history of the earth. Here Anodos says he feels like he is about to uncover secrets of his family's past in the way a geologist uncovers the secrets of the earth's construction and development over time. Charles Lyell (1797-1875) published the three-volume *Principles of Geology* (1830-33) and argued that the earth's crust was older than 6000 years, thus challenging the Bible's authority. Geology thus led the Victorians to further consider the debate between faith and science, which would culminate over Charles Darwin's (1809-82) *On the Origin of Species* (1859).

[7] Plural of stratum; in geology, a single layer of sedimentary rock.

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[8] Small compartments in the upper portion of the desk for storing papers. George Eliot (1818-80) in *Middlemarch* (1871-72) has the pedantic scholar Edward Casaubon keep his files for his misguided scholarly work *The Key to All Mythologies* in pigeon-holes in his desk.

[9] "Long-hidden world" refers to that other country, the past, which until now has been unknown to Anodos. He is about to learn about his family history. The key to this compartment is the key that opens the door to mysteries.

[10] Grate of iron that forms a defensive gate in a castle wall. Here, Anodos speaks of a "sort of flexible portcullis," a small set of bars blocking entrance to the desk's compartment. The past is a fortified territory.

[11] "Law of oblivion" is a legal term meaning intentionally overlooked, something deliberately set aside. Here the term fits with Anodos's sense of becoming of legal age and also his notion that he is to discover that which has until now remained neglected or hidden.

[12] This "tiny woman form" is MacDonald's image of a fairy. Here she is also Anodos's grandmother and hence she connects Anodos with imagination and a world beyond sense. Compare with the "tiny woman" in Chapter 24 of Dickens's *Little Dorrit* (1857). See Appendix D.

"Anodos, you never saw such a little creature before, did you?"

"No," said I; "and indeed I hardly believe I do now."

"Ah! that is always the way with you men; you believe nothing the first time; and it is foolish enough to let mere repetition convince you of what you consider in itself unbelievable. I am not going to argue with you, however, but to grant you a wish."

Here I could not help interrupting her with the foolish speech, of which, however, I had no cause to repent:

"How can such a very little creature as you grant or refuse anything?"

"Is that all the philosophy you have gained in one-and-twenty years?"[13] said she. "Form is much, but size is nothing.[14] It is a mere matter of relation. I suppose your six-foot lordship does not feel altogether insignificant, though to others you do look small beside your old Uncle Ralph,[15] who rises above you a great half-foot at least. But size is of so little consequence with me, that I may as well accommodate myself to your foolish prejudices."

So saying, she leapt from the desk upon the floor; where she stood a tall, gracious lady, with pale face and large blue eyes. Her dark hair flowed behind, wavy but uncurled, down to her waist, and against it her form stood clear in its robe of white.

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[13] Echoes are to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy," states Hamlet to Horatio in Act 1, scene 5, lines 167-8.

[14] The value (or the beauty) of something depends not upon its size, but rather upon its form. In other words, just because something is large, this does not mean that it is beautiful or even important. Aesthetics at the time differentiated between that which is beautiful and that which is sublime. Sublimity had to do with scale rather than size. Here the fairy is simply telling Anodos that the fact that he is bigger than she is does not make her any less important or real. Lurking here is an argument for the reality of that which we do not comprehend.

[15] Ralph is a popular name in MacDonald's fantasies and fairy tales: Ralph Rinkelmann is the central character in "The Shadows," an interpolated fairy tale in *Adela Cathcart* (1864), and in *Lilith* (1895) Mr. Vane's grandfather is Sir Ralph.

"Now," said she, "you will believe me."

Overcome with the presence of a beauty which I could now perceive, and drawn towards her by an attraction irresistible as incomprehensible,[16] I suppose I stretched out my arms towards her, for she drew back a step or two, and said:

"Foolish boy, if you could touch me, I should hurt you. Besides, I was two hundred and thirty-seven years old, last Midsummer eve;[17] and a man must not fall in love with his grandmother, you know."

"But you are not my grandmother," said I.

"How do you know that?" she retorted. "I dare say you know something of your great-grandfathers a good deal further back than that; but you know very little about your great-grandmothers on either side. Now, to the point. Your little sister was reading a fairy-tale to you last night."

"She was."

"When she had finished, she said, as she closed the book, 'Is there a fairy-country, brother?' You replied with a sigh, 'I suppose there is, if one could find the way into it.'"

"I did; but I meant something quite different from what you seem to think."

"Never mind what I seem to think. You shall find the way into Fairy Land to-morrow. Now look in my eyes."

Eagerly I did so. They filled me with an unknown longing. I remembered somehow that my mother died when I was a baby. I looked deeper and deeper, till they spread around me like seas, and I sank in their waters. I forgot all the rest, till I found myself at the window, whose gloomy curtains were withdrawn, and where I stood gazing on a whole heaven of stars, small and sparkling in the moonlight. Below lay a sea, still as death and hoary in the moon, sweeping into bays and around capes and islands, away, away, I knew not whither. Alas! it was no sea, but a low fog burnished by the moon. "Surely there is such a sea somewhere!" said I to myself. A low sweet voice beside me replied—

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[16] The phrase "attraction irresistible as incomprehensible" indicates that Anodos finds himself drawn to this woman, but upon reflection he does not understand the nature of this attraction. He is, as yet, inexperienced in matters of the heart, or indeed, of the flesh. He is an innocent encountering sexual attraction for the first time.

[17] Also known as St. John's Day; designates the summer solstice, the time when the sun begins its return journey south. The solstice, in the northern hemisphere, falls between June 19 and June 25, but it is celebrated on June 24.

“In Fairy Land, Anodos.”

I turned, but saw no one. I closed the secretary, and went to my own room, and to bed.

All this I recalled as I lay with half-closed eyes. I was soon to find the truth of the lady’s promise, that this day I should discover the road into Fairy Land.

Chapter II

> "Wo ist der Strom?" rief er mit Thränen. "Siehst du nicht seine blauen Wellen über uns?" Er sah hinauf, und der blaue Strom floss leise über ihrem Haupte.
>
> —NOVALIS, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*.[1]

> "Where is the stream?" cried he, with tears. "Seest thou not its blue waves above us?" He looked up, and lo! the blue stream was flowing gently over their heads.

While these strange events were passing through my mind, I suddenly, as one awakes to the consciousness that the sea has been moaning by him for hours, or that the storm has been howling about his window all night, became aware of the sound of running water near me; and looking out of bed, I saw that a large green marble basin, in which I was wont to wash, and which stood on a low pedestal of the same material in a corner of my room, was overflowing like a spring; and that a stream of clear water was running over the carpet, all the length of the room, finding its outlet I knew not where. And, stranger still, where this carpet, which I had myself designed to imitate a field of grass and daisies, bordered the course of the little stream, the grass-blades and daisies seemed to wave in a tiny breeze that followed the water's flow; while under the rivulet they bent and swayed with every motion of the changeful current, as if they were about to dissolve with it, and, forsaking their fixed form, become fluent as the waters.

My dressing-table was an old-fashioned piece of furniture of black oak, with drawers all down the front. These were elaborately carved in foliage, of which ivy formed the chief part. The nearer end of this table remained just as it had been, but on the further end a singular change had commenced. I happened to fix my eye on a little cluster of ivy-leaves. The first of these was evidently the work of the carver; the next looked curious; the third was unmistakable ivy; and just beyond it a tendril of clematis had twined itself about the gilt handle of one of the drawers. Hearing next a slight motion above me, I looked up, and saw that the branches and leaves designed upon the curtains of my bed were slightly in motion. Not knowing what change might follow next, I thought it high time to get up; and, springing from the bed, my bare feet alighted upon a cool green sward; and although I dressed in all haste, I found myself completing my toilet under the boughs of a great tree, whose top waved in the golden stream of the sunrise with many interchanging lights, and with shadows of leaf and branch gliding over leaf and branch, as the cool morning wind swung it to and fro, like a sinking sea-wave.

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[1] Novalis is Georg Philipp Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenberg (1772-1801). A German writer who helped define German Romanticism, he was a key influence on MacDonald. *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802) is a fantastical romance that concerns a young poet in search of love, who has dream visions. A central symbol in the work is a blue flower, which has become an icon for German Romanticism.

After washing as well as I could in the clear stream, I rose and looked around me. The tree under which I seemed to have lain all night was one of the advanced guard of a dense forest, towards which the rivulet[2] ran. Faint traces of a footpath, much overgrown with grass and moss, and with here and there a pimpernel even, were discernible along the right bank. "This," thought I, "must surely be the path into Fairy Land, which the lady of last night promised I should so soon find." I crossed the rivulet, and accompanied it, keeping the footpath on its right bank, until it led me, as I expected, into the wood. Here I left it, without any good reason, and with a vague feeling that I ought to have followed its course: I took a more southerly direction.[3]

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[2] Small river or stream.

[3] The transformation scene of Anodos's bedroom into Fairy Land is one of MacDonald's finest pieces of fantastical writing. MacDonald ushers in the concept of the portal fantasy that helps define much of fantasy literature, from Lewis Carroll's rabbit-hole and looking-glass to C. S. Lewis's numerous portals in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963) replicates the bedroom transformation scene into a fantastical realm. The most notable recent example of the portal fantasy is, of course, Platform 9 3/4 at King's Cross Station that allows Harry Potter to leave the Muggle world for Hogwarts.

Chapter III

Man doth usurp all space,
Stares thee, in rock, bush, river, in the face.
Never yet thine eyes behold a tree;
'Tis no sea thou seest in the sea,
'Tis but a disguised humanity.
To avoid thy fellow, vain thy plan;
All that interests a man, is man.
HENRY SUTTON.[1]

The trees, which were far apart where I entered, giving free passage to the level rays of the sun, closed rapidly as I advanced, so that ere long their crowded stems barred the sunlight out, forming as it were a thick grating between me and the East. I seemed to be advancing towards a second midnight. In the midst of the intervening twilight, however, before I entered what appeared to be the darkest portion of the forest, I saw a country maiden coming towards me from its very depths. She did not seem to observe me, for she was apparently intent upon a bunch of wild flowers which she carried in her hand. I could hardly see her face; for, though she came right towards me, she never looked up. But when we met, instead of passing, she turned and walked alongside of me for a few yards, still keeping her face downwards, and busied with her flowers. She spoke rapidly, however, all the time, in a low tone, as if talking to herself, but evidently addressing the purport[2] of her words to me. She seemed afraid of being observed by some lurking foe. "Trust the Oak," said she; "trust the Oak, and the Elm, and the great Beech. Take care of the Birch, for though she is honest, she is too young not to be changeable. But shun the Ash and the Alder; for the Ash is an ogre[3]—you will know him by his thick fingers; and the Alder will smother you with her web of hair, if you let her near you at night." All this was uttered without pause or alteration of tone. Then she turned suddenly and left me, walking still with the same unchanging gait.[4] I could not conjecture what she meant, but satisfied myself with thinking that it would be time enough to find out her meaning when there was need to make use of her warning; and that the occasion would reveal the admonition.[5] I concluded from the flowers that she carried, that the forest could not be everywhere so dense as it appeared from where I was now walking; and I was right in this conclusion. For soon I came to a more open part, and by and by crossed a wide grassy glade, on which were several circles of brighter green. But even here I was struck with the utter stillness. No bird sang.[6] No insect hummed. Not a living creature crossed my way. Yet somehow the whole environment seemed only asleep, and to wear even in sleep an air of expectation. The trees seemed all to have an expression of conscious mystery, as if they said to themselves, "We could, an' if we would." They had all a meaning look about them. Then I remembered that night is the fairies' day,[7] and the moon their sun; and I thought—Everything sleeps and dreams now: when the night comes, it will be different. At the same time I, being a man and a child of the day, felt some anxiety as to how I should fare among the elves and other children of the night who wake when mortals dream, and find their common life in those wondrous hours that flow noiselessly over the moveless death-like forms of men and women and children, lying strewn and parted beneath the weight of the heavy waves of night, which flow on and beat them down, and hold them drowned and senseless, until the ebbtide comes, and the waves sink away, back into the ocean of the dark. But I took courage and went on. Soon,

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[1] Henry Septimus Sutton (1825-1901) was a poet and journalist who met MacDonald in the early 1850s in Manchester. They became lifelong friends, Sutton sharing something of MacDonald's mystical bent. In 1857, Sutton joined the Peter Street Society of Swedenborgians and was active as a lay preacher. MacDonald quotes Sutton's poem "Man" (1848).

[2] Meaning or significance

[3] An ogre is a giant who eats humans, often children. MacDonald depicts the Ash tree as an ogre. The Ash has a rich history in mythology. It is the World Tree in Norse mythology, called Yggdrasil, associated with Odin. It also has feminine aspects in some cultures. MacDonald gives the Ash a special spin in his connection of the Ash with a malevolent giant (see http://www.druidry.org/library/trees/tree-

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lore-ash). The Alder too has a presence in mythology, often a tree associated with female goddesses.

[4] Person's way of walking.

[5] Rebuke or a warning that someone has committed a fault or overlooked something.

[6] "No bird sang" is an allusion to John Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" (1819). The first verse ends with these words: "O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms, / Alone and palely loitering? / The sedge has withered from the lake, / And no birds sing." The allusion is not exact, but Keats's poem tells the story of a wandering knight who reminds us of Anodos throughout *Phantastes*. See Appendix C.

[7] Compare to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595-1596), Act 5, Scene 2, lines 9-17: "Now it is the time of night / That the graves, all gaping wide, / Every one lets forth his sprite, / In the church-way paths to glide: / And we fairies, that do run / By the triple Hecate's team, / From the presence of the sun, / Following darkness like a dream, / Now are frolic . . . ."

however, I became again anxious, though from another cause. I had eaten nothing that day, and for an hour past had been feeling the want of food. So I grew afraid lest I should find nothing to meet my human necessities in this strange place; but once more I comforted myself with hope and went on.

Before noon, I fancied I saw a thin blue smoke rising amongst the stems of larger trees in front of me; and soon I came to an open spot of ground in which stood a little cottage, so built that the stems of four great trees formed its corners, while their branches met and intertwined over its roof, heaping a great cloud of leaves over it, up towards the heavens. I wondered at finding a human dwelling in this neighbourhood; and yet it did not look altogether human, though sufficiently so to encourage me to expect some sort of food. Seeing no door, I went round to the other side, and there I found one, wide open. A woman sat beside it, preparing some vegetables for dinner. This was homely and comforting. As I came near, she looked up, and seeing me, showed no surprise, but bent her head again over her work, and said in a low tone:

"Did you see my daughter?"

"I believe I did," said I. "Can you give me something to eat, for I am very hungry."

"With pleasure," she replied, in the same tone; "but do not say anything more, till you come into the house, for the Ash is watching us."

Having said this, she rose and led the way into the cottage; which, I now saw, was built of the stems of small trees set closely together, and was furnished with rough chairs and tables, from which even the bark had not been removed. As soon as she had shut the door and set a chair:

"You have fairy blood in you," said she, looking hard at me.

"How do you know that?"

"You could not have got so far into this wood if it were not so; and I am trying to find out some trace of it in your countenance. I think I see it."

"What do you see?"

"Oh, never mind: I may be mistaken in that."

"But how then do you come to live here?"

"Because I too have fairy blood in me."

Here I, in my turn, looked hard at her; and thought I could perceive, notwithstanding the coarseness of her features, and especially the heaviness of her eyebrows, a something unusual—I could hardly call it grace, and yet it was an expression that strangely contrasted with the form of her features. I noticed too that her hands were delicately formed, though brown with work and exposure.

"I should be ill," she continued, "if I did not live on the borders of the fairies' country, and now and then eat of their food. And I see by your eyes that you are not quite free of the same need; though, from your education and the activity of your mind, you have felt it less than I. You may be further removed too from the fairy race."

I remembered what the lady had said about my grandmothers.

Here she placed some bread and some milk before me, with a kindly apology for the homeliness of the fare, with which, however, I was in no humour to quarrel. I now thought it time to try to get some explanation of the strange words both of her daughter and herself.

"What did you mean by speaking so about the Ash?"

She rose and looked out of the little window. My eyes followed her; but as the window was too small to allow anything to be seen from where I was sitting, I rose and looked over her shoulder. I had just time to see, across the open space, on the edge of the denser forest, a single large ash-tree, whose foliage showed bluish, amidst the truer green of the other trees around it; when she pushed me back with an expression of impatience and terror, and then almost shut out the light from the window by setting up a large old book in it.

"In general," said she, recovering her composure, "there is no danger in the daytime, for then he is sound asleep; but there is something unusual going on in the woods; there must be some solemnity among the fairies to-night, for all the trees are restless, and although they cannot come awake, they see and hear in their sleep."

"But what danger is to be dreaded from him?"

Instead of answering the question, she went again to the window and looked out, saying she feared the fairies would be interrupted by foul weather, for a storm was brewing in the west.

"And the sooner it grows dark, the sooner the Ash will be awake," added she.

I asked her how she knew that there was any unusual excitement in the woods. She replied:

"Besides the look of the trees, the dog there is unhappy; and the eyes and ears of the white rabbit are redder than usual, and he frisks about as if he expected some fun.[8] If the cat were at home, she would have her back up; for the young fairies pull the sparks out of her tail with bramble thorns, and she knows when they are coming. So do I, in another way."

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[8] MacDonald's friend, Lewis Carroll, picks up the white rabbit for his story, *Alice's*

At this instant, a grey cat rushed in like a demon,[9] and disappeared in a hole in the wall.

"There, I told you!" said the woman.

"But what of the ash-tree?" said I, returning once more to the subject. Here, however, the young woman, whom I had met in the morning, entered. A smile passed between the mother and daughter; and then the latter began to help her mother in little household duties.

"I should like to stay here till the evening," I said; "and then go on my journey, if you will allow me."

"You are welcome to do as you please; only it might be better to stay all night, than risk the dangers of the wood then. Where are you going?"

"Nay, that I do not know," I replied; "but I wish to see all that is to be seen, and therefore I should like to start just at sundown."

"You are a bold youth, if you have any idea of what you are daring; but a rash one, if you know nothing about it; and, excuse me, you do not seem very well informed about the country and its manners. However, no one comes here but for some reason, either known to himself or to those who have charge of him; so you shall do just as you wish."

Accordingly I sat down, and feeling rather tired, and disinclined for further talk, I asked leave to look at the old book which still screened the window. The woman brought it to me directly, but not before taking another look towards the forest, and then drawing a white blind over the window. I sat down opposite to it by the table, on which I laid the great old volume, and read. It contained many wondrous tales of Fairy Land, and olden times, and the Knights of King Arthur's table. I read on and on, till the shades of the afternoon began to deepen; for in the midst of the forest it gloomed earlier than in the open country. At length I came to this passage:

"Here it chaunced, that upon their quest, Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale[10] rencountered in the depths of a great forest. Now Sir

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Adventures in Wonderland (1865). See John Docherty, *Literary Products of the Lewis Carroll-George MacDonald Friendship*, Revised edition. Edwin Mellen, 1997.

[9] The ancient Egyptian goddess Bastet or Bast was depicted as a cat. A demon is a spirit, often thought of as an "evil spirit." Thus cats are simultaneously seen as divine and demonic in mythology.

[10] Two of King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table. Both Galahad and Percivale (sometimes spelled Percival or Perceval) are associated with the Holy

Galahad was dight[11] all in harness of silver, clear and shining; the which is a delight to look upon, but full hasty to tarnish, and withouten the labour of a ready squire, uneath[12] to be kept fair and clean. And yet withouten squire or page, Sir Galahad's armour shone like the moon. And he rode a great white mare, whose bases and other housings were black,[13] but all besprent[14] with fair lilys of silver sheen. Whereas Sir Percivale bestrode a red horse, with a tawny[15] mane and tail; whose trappings were all to-smirched with mud and mire; and his armour was wondrous rosty to behold, ne could he by any art furbish it again; so that as the sun in his going down shone twixt the bare trunks of the trees, full upon the knights twain, the one did seem all shining with light, and the other all to glow with ruddy fire. Now it came about in this wise. For Sir Percivale, after his escape from the demon lady, whenas the cross on the handle of his sword smote him to the heart, and he rove himself through the thigh, and escaped away, he came to a great wood; and, in nowise cured of his fault, yet bemoaning the same, the damosel of the alder tree encountered him, right fair to see; and with her fair words and false countenance she comforted him and beguiled him, until he followed her where she led him to a—"[16]

Here a low hurried cry from my hostess caused me to look up from the book, and I read no more.

"Look there!" she said; "look at his fingers!"

Grail, a cup or salver sometimes connected to the cup Jesus offered his disciples at the Last Supper. Both Percivale and Galahad quest to find the Holy Grail, in hopes of achieving completeness of being. Percival features promininetly in two early works: Chretien de Troyes's (birth and death date unknown) *Le Conte du Graal* (*The Story of the Grail*, probably written between 1135-1190), focuses on Percival, while Thomas Malory's (1415-18, estimated-1471) *Le Morte d'Arthur* (*The Death of Arthur*), published in 1485, also features Galahad. MacDonald's contemporaries were also interested in this duo: Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-92) published the poem "Sir Galahad" in 1842, which was included in *Idylls of the King* (1859-1885)—the poem is narrated by Percival, who tells the story of Galahad. William Morris (1834-1896), who moved into MacDonald's house in Hammersmith (in London) published *Sir Galahad, A Christmas Mystery* in 1858.

[11] Clothed or equipped.

[12] From Middle English, meaning "difficult."

[13] "Bases" refers to the cloth skirting (later metal plating) that knights wore over their armour. This was decorative, but it also served to supplement protection of the upper leg. "Housings" refer to any outer covering that serves to protect the wearer.

[14] From Middle English, meaning "sprinkled."

[15] Yellowish brown or an orange-brown colour.

[16] Anodos is reading from the story of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. What he reads prepares us for the adventures that lie ahead for him.

Just as I had been reading in the book, the setting sun was shining through a cleft in the clouds piled up in the west; and a shadow as of a large distorted hand, with thick knobs and humps on the fingers, so that it was much wider across the fingers than across the undivided part of the hand, passed slowly over the little blind, and then as slowly returned in the opposite direction.

"He is almost awake, mother; and greedier than usual to-night."

"Hush, child; you need not make him more angry with us than he is; for you do not know how soon something may happen to oblige us to be in the forest after nightfall."

"But you are in the forest," said I; "how is it that you are safe here?"

"He dares not come nearer than he is now," she replied; "for any of those four oaks,[17] at the corners of our cottage, would tear him to pieces; they are our friends. But he stands there and makes awful faces at us sometimes, and stretches out his long arms and fingers, and tries to kill us with fright; for, indeed, that is his favourite way of doing. Pray, keep out of his way to-night."

"Shall I be able to see these beings?" said I.

"That I cannot tell yet, not knowing how much of the fairy nature there is in you. But we shall soon see whether you can discern the fairies in my little garden, and that will be some guide to us."

"Are the trees fairies too, as well as the flowers?" I asked.

"They are of the same race," she replied; "though those you call fairies in your country are chiefly the young children of the flower fairies. They are very fond of having fun with the thick people, as they call you; for, like most children, they like fun better than anything else."

"Why do you have flowers so near you then? Do they not annoy you?"

"Oh, no, they are very amusing, with their mimicries of grown people, and mock solemnities. Sometimes they will act a whole play through before my eyes, with perfect composure and assurance, for they are not afraid of me. Only, as soon as they have done, they burst into peals of tiny laughter, as if it was such a joke to have been serious over anything. These I speak of, however, are the fairies of the garden. They are more staid and educated than those of the fields and woods. Of course they have near relations amongst the wild flowers, but they patronize them, and treat them as country cousins, who know nothing of life, and very little of manners. Now and then, however, they are compelled to envy the grace and simplicity of the natural flowers."

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[17] Oak trees in mythology are venerated for their strength and durability. The oak is often associated with a deity (Zeus and Thor, for example).

"Do they live *in* the flowers?" I said.

"I cannot tell," she replied. "There is something in it I do not understand. Sometimes they disappear altogether, even from me, though I know they are near. They seem to die always with the flowers they resemble, and by whose names they are called; but whether they return to life with the fresh flowers, or, whether it be new flowers, new fairies, I cannot tell. They have as many sorts of dispositions as men and women, while their moods are yet more variable; twenty different expressions will cross their little faces in half a minute. I often amuse myself with watching them, but I have never been able to make personal acquaintance with any of them. If I speak to one, he or she looks up in my face, as if I were not worth heeding, gives a little laugh, and runs away." Here the woman started, as if suddenly recollecting herself, and said in a low voice to her daughter, "Make haste—go and watch him, and see in what direction he goes."

I may as well mention here, that the conclusion I arrived at from the observations I was afterwards able to make, was, that the flowers die because the fairies go away; not that the fairies disappear because the flowers die. The flowers seem a sort of houses for them, or outer bodies, which they can put on or off when they please. Just as you could form some idea of the nature of a man from the kind of house he built, if he followed his own taste, so you could, without seeing the fairies, tell what any one of them is like, by looking at the flower till you feel that you understand it. For just what the flower says to you, would the face and form of the fairy say; only so much more plainly as a face and human figure can express more than a flower. For the house or the clothes, though like the inhabitant or the wearer, cannot be wrought into an equal power of utterance. Yet you would see a strange resemblance, almost oneness, between the flower and the fairy, which you could not describe, but which described itself to you. Whether all the flowers have fairies, I cannot determine, any more than I can be sure whether all men and women have souls.

The woman and I continued the conversation for a few minutes longer. I was much interested by the information she gave me, and astonished at the language in which she was able to convey it. It seemed that intercourse with the fairies was no bad education in itself. But now the daughter returned with the news, that the Ash had just gone away in a south-westerly direction; and, as my course seemed to lie eastward,[18] she hoped I should be in no danger of meeting him if I departed at once. I looked out of the little window, and there stood the ash-tree, to my eyes the same as before; but I believed that they knew better than I did, and prepared to go. I pulled out my purse, but to my dismay there was nothing in it. The woman with a smile begged me not to trouble myself, for money was not of the slightest use there; and as I might meet with people in my journeys whom I could not recognise to be fairies, it was well I had no money to offer, for nothing offended them so much.[19]

"They would think," she added, "that you were making game of them; and that is their peculiar privilege with regard to us." So we went together into the little garden which sloped down towards a lower part of the wood.

Here, to my great pleasure, all was life and bustle. There was still light enough from the day to see a little; and the pale half-moon, half-way to the zenith, was reviving every moment. The whole garden was like a carnival,[20] with tiny, gaily decorated forms, in groups, assemblies, processions, pairs or trios, moving stately on, running about wildly, or sauntering hither and thither. From the cups or bells of tall flowers, as from balconies, some looked down on the masses below, now bursting with laughter, now grave as owls; but even in their deepest solemnity, seeming only to be waiting for the arrival of the next laugh. Some were launched on a little marshy stream at the bottom, in boats chosen from the heaps of last year's leaves that lay about, curled and withered. These soon sank with them; whereupon they swam ashore and got others. Those who took fresh rose-leaves for their boats floated the longest; but for these they had to fight; for the fairy of the rose-tree complained bitterly that they were stealing her clothes, and defended her property bravely.

"You can't wear half you've got," said some.

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[18] Eastward is the direction of the sunrise and a new day. Anodos's journey is toward a new day for him; he will be reborn, as it were.

[19] In the land of the fairies, money is useless. Here mutual assistance and ministration are the valued "coin" of the realm.

[20] Carnival, a time of revelry and celebration and even carousing, is also associated with the start of Lent in Christian countries. The fairies cavort and laugh and generally live a boisterous life that turns conventional life upside down. The antics of the fairies are a rebuke to the selfish and insular life Anodos has been used to in his world, with its emphasis on property and ownership and hierarchy. Carnival as a literary trope is the subject of M. M. Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World*. Trans. Hélène Iswolsky. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968.

"Never you mind; I don't choose you to have them; they are my property."

"All for the good of the community!" said one, and ran off with a great hollow leaf. But the rose-fairy sprang after him (what a beauty she was! only too like a drawing-room young lady), knocked him heels-over-head as he ran, and recovered her great red leaf. But in the meantime twenty had hurried off in different directions with others just as good; and the little creature sat down and cried, and then, in a pet, sent a perfect pink snow-storm of petals from her tree, leaping from branch to branch, and stamping and shaking and pulling. At last, after another good cry, she chose the biggest she could find, and ran away laughing, to launch her boat amongst the rest.

But my attention was first and chiefly attracted by a group of fairies near the cottage, who were talking together around what seemed a last dying primrose. They talked singing, and their talk made a song, something like this:

"Sister Snowdrop died
    Before we were born."
"She came like a bride
    In a snowy morn."
"What's a bride?"
    "What is snow?"
"Never tried."
    "Do not know."

"Who told you about her?"
    "Little Primrose there
Cannot do without her."
    "Oh, so sweetly fair!"
"Never fear,
    She will come,
Primrose dear."
    "Is she dumb?"

"She'll come by and by."
    "You will never see her."
"She went home to die,
    Till the new year."
"Snowdrop!" "'Tis no good
    To invite her."

"Primrose is very rude,"
"I will bite her."

"Oh, you naughty Pocket!
Look, she drops her head."
"She deserved it, Rocket,
And she was nearly dead."
"To your hammock—off with you!"
"And swing alone."
"No one will laugh with you."
"No not one."

"Now let us moan."
"And cover her o'er."
"Primrose is gone."
"All but the flower."
"Here is a leaf."
"Lay her upon it."
"Follow in grief."
"Pocket has done it."

"Deeper, poor creature!
Winter may come."
"He cannot reach her—
That is a hum."
"She is buried, the beauty!"
"Now she is done."
"That was the duty."
"Now for the fun."[21]

And with a wild laugh they sprang away, most of them towards the cottage. During the latter part of the song-talk, they had formed themselves into a funeral procession, two of them bearing poor Primrose, whose death Pocket[22] had hastened by biting her stalk, upon one of her own great leaves. They bore her solemnly along some distance, and then buried her under a tree. Although I say *her*, I saw nothing but the withered primrose-flower on its long stalk. Pocket, who had been expelled from the company by common consent, went sulkily away towards her hammock, for she was the fairy of the calceolaria,[23] and looked rather wicked. When she reached its stem, she stopped and looked round. I could not help speaking to her, for I stood near her. I said: "Pocket, how could you be so naughty?"

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[21] The fairies are associated with poetry and the imagination. In this poem, the fairies encounter death, but it is a passing phase and it does not put an end to fun, the fairies' most pressing interest.

[22] *Primrose* means "first rose" and the flower gives its name to the saying "the primrose path," first appearing in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1.3.48-52). Pocket may be MacDonald's feminine version of Puck (Robin Goodfellow), the mischievous fairy in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595-1596).

"I am never naughty," she said, half-crossly, half-defiantly; "only if you come near my hammock, I will bite you, and then you will go away."

"Why did you bite poor Primrose?"

"Because she said we should never see Snowdrop; as if we were not good enough to look at her, and she was, the proud thing!—served her right!"

"Oh, Pocket, Pocket," said I; but by this time the party which had gone towards the house, rushed out again, shouting and screaming with laughter. Half of them were on the cat's back, and half held on by her fur and tail, or ran beside her; till, more coming to their help, the furious cat was held fast; and they proceeded to pick the sparks out of her with thorns and pins, which they handled like harpoons. Indeed, there were more instruments at work about her than there could have been sparks in her.[24] One little fellow who held on hard by the tip of the tail, with his feet planted on the ground at an angle of forty-five degrees, helping to keep her fast, administered a continuous flow of admonitions to Pussy.

"Now, Pussy, be patient. You know quite well it is all for your good. You cannot be comfortable with all those sparks in you; and, indeed, I am charitably disposed to believe" (here he became very pompous) "that they are the cause of all your bad temper; so we must have them all out, every one; else we shall be reduced to the painful necessity of cutting your claws, and pulling out your eye-teeth. Quiet! Pussy, quiet!"

But with a perfect hurricane of feline curses, the poor animal broke loose, and dashed across the garden and through the hedge, faster than even the fairies could follow. "Never mind, never mind, we shall find her again; and by that time she will have laid in a fresh stock of sparks. Hooray!" And off they set, after some new mischief.

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[23] Flower often called Lady's Slipper, or sometimes pocketbook flower. The flower is usually yellow or orange. Pocket is, suitably, a fairy associated with this flower.

[24] A cat's fur contains electricity, as any cat lover will know. The fairies are tormenting the cat by activating the electric sparks in her fur. For an examination of this episode that argues for a pun on the word "cathode" (cat/hode), see Fernando Soto's "Mirrors in MacDonald's *Phantastes*: A Reflexive Structure," *North Wind: A Journal of George MacDonald Studies*, vol. 23, 2004, pp. 27-47.

But I will not linger to enlarge on the amusing display of these frolicsome creatures. Their manners and habits are now so well known to the world, having been so often described by eyewitnesses, that it would be only indulging self-conceit, to add my account in full to the rest. I cannot help wishing, however, that my readers could see them for themselves. Especially do I desire that they should see the fairy of the daisy; a little, chubby, round-eyed child, with such innocent trust in his look! Even the most mischievous of the fairies would not tease him, although he did not belong to their set at all, but was quite a little country bumpkin. He wandered about alone, and looked at everything, with his hands in his little pockets, and a white nightcap on, the darling! He was not so beautiful as many other wild flowers I saw afterwards, but so dear and loving in his looks and little confident ways.

Chapter IV.

When bale is att hyest, boote is nyest.

Ballad of Sir Aldingar.[1]

By this time, my hostess was quite anxious that I should be gone. So, with warm thanks for their hospitality, I took my leave, and went my way through the little garden towards the forest. Some of the garden flowers had wandered into the wood, and were growing here and there along the path, but the trees soon became too thick and shadowy for them. I particularly noticed some tall lilies, which grew on both sides of the way, with large, dazzlingly white flowers, set off by the universal green. It was now dark enough for me to see that every flower was shining with a light of its own. Indeed it was by this light that I saw them, an internal, peculiar light, proceeding from each, and not reflected from a common source of light as in the day-time. This light sufficed only for the plant itself, and was not strong enough to cast any but the faintest shadows around it, or to illuminate any of the neighbouring objects with other than the faintest tinge of its own individual hue. From the lilies above mentioned, from the campanulas,[2] from the foxgloves,[3] and every bell-shaped flower, curious little figures shot up their heads, peeped at me, and drew back. They seemed to inhabit them, as snails their shells; but I was sure some of them were intruders, and belonged to the gnomes or goblin-fairies, who inhabit the ground and earthy creeping plants. From the cups of Arum[4] lilies, creatures with great heads and grotesque faces shot up like Jack- in-the-box,[5] and made grimaces at me; or rose slowly and slily[6] over the edge of the cup, and spouted water at me, slipping suddenly back, like those little soldier-crabs that inhabit the shells of sea-snails. Passing a row of tall thistles, I saw them crowded with little faces, which peeped every one from behind its flower, and drew back as quickly; and I heard them saying to each other, evidently intending me to hear, but the speaker always hiding behind his tuft, when I looked in his direction, "Look at him! Look at him! He has begun a story without a beginning, and it will never have any end. He! he! he! Look at him!"[7]

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[1] A child ballad of various origins. Aldingar attempts to seduce the Queen, who spurns him and sets off Aldingar to falsely accuse the Queen of sleeping with a leper. The king believes Aldingar, and the Queen asks that a knight fight for her honor. Unable to find a knight, she relies on a four-year-old boy, who defeats Aldingar. On his deathbed he admits his accusation was false. The history of this ballad can be found in Paul Christopherson's *The Ballad of Sir Aldingar, its Origins and Analogues*, Oxford UP, 1952.

[2] Bell-shaped flowers, the most famous being the Bluebell of Scotland and the Canterbury Bells.

[3] A flowering plant that is considered to have medicinal purposes; also known as a mullein.

[4] Flower that produces colored berries; also known as Wake-Robins, Cuckoo-Pints, and Lords and Ladies.

But as I went further into the wood, these sights and sounds became fewer, giving way to others of a different character. A little forest of wild hyacinths[8] was alive with exquisite creatures, who stood nearly motionless, with drooping necks, holding each by the stem of her flower, and swaying gently with it, whenever a low breath of wind swung the crowded floral belfry. In like manner, though differing of course in form and meaning, stood a group of harebells,[9] like little angels waiting, ready, till they were wanted to go on some yet unknown message. In darker nooks, by the mossy roots of the trees, or in little tufts of grass, each dwelling in a globe of its own green light, weaving a network of grass and its shadows, glowed the glowworms. They were just like the glowworms of our own land, for they are fairies everywhere; worms in the day, and glowworms at night, when their own can appear, and they can be themselves to others as well as themselves. But they had their enemies here. For I saw great strong-armed beetles, hurrying about with most unwieldy haste, awkward as elephant-calves, looking apparently for glowworms; for the moment a beetle espied one, through what to it was a forest of grass, or an underwood of moss, it pounced upon it, and bore it away, in spite of its feeble resistance. Wondering what their object could be, I watched one of the beetles, and then I discovered a thing I could not account for. But it is no use trying to account for things in Fairy Land; and one who travels there soon learns to forget the very idea of doing so, and takes everything as it comes; like a child, who, being in a chronic condition of wonder, is surprised at nothing.[10] What I saw was this. Everywhere, here and there over the ground, lay little, dark-looking lumps of something more like earth than anything else, and about the size of a chestnut. The beetles hunted in couples for these; and having found one, one of them stayed to watch it, while the other hurried to find a glowworm. By signals, I presume, between them, the latter soon found his companion again; they then took the glowworm and held its luminous tail to the dark earthly pallet; when lo! it shot up into the air like a sky-rocket, seldom however reaching the height of the highest tree. Just like a rocket too, it burst in the air, and fell in a shower of the most gorgeously coloured sparks of every variety of hue; golden and red, and purple and green, and blue and rosy fires crossed and intercrossed each other, beneath the shadowy heads, and between the columnar stems of the forest trees. They never used the same glowworm twice, I observed; but let him go, apparently uninjured by the use they had made of him.

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[5] MacDonald probably has three meanings in mind, referring 1) to a thief who tricks people by exchanging empty boxes for ones with money, 2) to the children's toy where a figure, often dressed as clown or jester, springs out of a box when the lid is raised, and 3) to fireworks.

[6] Also *slyly*: clever and skillful and cunning; to act in a mischievous or malicious way. This adverb perfectly captures the peculiar nature of fairies that MacDonald describes.

[7] The fairies' taunt of Anodos reminds him—and the reader—of the self-conscious or metafictional nature of the quest in *Phantastes* and reinforces one meaning of his name—"pathless."

[8] According to Ovid, hyacinths are deep red or purple flowers; a lily, also called gladiolus, iris, and larkspur. Hyacinth was a Greek hero killed during a discus competition. Apollo, fond of Hyacinth, created a flower from his blood, thus keeping him from going to Hades.

[9] Wild hyacinths, also called campanulas. Legend has it that these flowers grew where hares/rabbits lived.

In other parts, the whole of the immediately surrounding foliage was illuminated by the interwoven dances in the air of splendidly coloured fire-flies, which sped hither and thither, turned, twisted, crossed, and re-crossed, entwining every complexity of intervolved motion. Here and there, whole mighty trees glowed with an emitted phosphorescent light. You could trace the very course of the great roots in the earth by the faint light that came through; and every twig, and every vein on every leaf was a streak of pale fire.

All this time, as I went through the wood, I was haunted with the feeling that other shapes, more like my own size and mien,[11] were moving about at a little distance on all sides of me. But as yet I could discern none of them, although the moon was high enough to send a great many of her rays down between the trees, and these rays were unusually bright, and sight-giving, notwithstanding she was only a half-moon. I constantly imagined, however, that forms were visible in all directions except that to which my gaze was turned; and that they only became invisible, or resolved themselves into other woodland shapes, the moment my looks were directed towards them. However this may have been, except for this feeling of presence, the woods seemed utterly bare of anything like human companionship, although my glance often fell on some object which I fancied to be a human form; for I soon found that I was quite deceived; as, the moment I fixed my regard on it, it showed plainly that it was a bush, or a tree, or a rock.

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[10] This comment reflects MacDonald's notions of the fairy tale or fantasy that complements Novalis's belief that such fantasies have no logical rationality. MacDonald views the "childlike" as the state in which an adult can appreciate the wondrous world. See his "The Fantastic Imagination" for his full treatment on the fantastic (Appendix D).

[11] The character of a person, or mood.

Soon a vague sense of discomfort possessed me. With variations of relief, this gradually increased; as if some evil thing were wandering about in my neighbourhood, sometimes nearer and sometimes further off, but still approaching. The feeling continued and deepened, until all my pleasure in the shows of various kinds that everywhere betokened[12] the presence of the merry fairies, vanished by degrees, and left me full of anxiety and fear,[13] which I was unable to associate with any definite object whatever. At length the thought crossed my mind with horror: "Can it be possible that the Ash is looking for me? or that, in his nightly wanderings, his path is gradually verging towards mine?" I comforted myself, however, by remembering that he had started quite in another direction; one that would lead him, if he kept it, far apart from me; especially as, for the last two or three hours, I had been diligently journeying eastward. I kept on my way, therefore, striving by direct effort of the will against the encroaching fear; and to this end occupying my mind, as much as I could, with other thoughts. I was so far successful that, although I was conscious, if I yielded for a moment, I should be almost overwhelmed with horror, I was yet able to walk right on for an hour or more. What I feared I could not tell. Indeed, I was left in a state of the vaguest uncertainty as regarded the nature of my enemy, and knew not the mode or object of his attacks; for, somehow or other, none of my questions had succeeded in drawing a definite answer from the dame in the cottage. How then to defend myself I knew not; nor even by what sign I might with certainty recognise the presence of my foe; for as yet this vague though powerful fear was all the indication of danger I had. To add to my distress, the clouds in the west had risen nearly to the top of the skies, and they and the moon were travelling slowly towards each other. Indeed, some of their advanced guard had already met her, and she had begun to wade through a filmy vapour that gradually deepened. At length she was for a moment almost entirely obscured. When she shone out again, with a brilliancy increased by the contrast, I saw plainly on the path before me—from around which at this spot the trees receded, leaving a small space of green sward—the shadow of a large hand, with knotty joints[14] and protuberances here and there. Especially I remarked, even in the midst of my fear, the bulbous points of the fingers. I looked hurriedly all around, but could see nothing from which such a shadow should fall. Now, however, that I had a direction, however undetermined, in which to project my apprehension, the very sense of danger and need of action overcame that stifling which is the worst property of fear. I reflected in a moment, that if this were indeed a shadow, it was useless to look for the object that cast it in any other direction than between the shadow and the moon. I looked, and peered, and intensified my vision, all to no purpose. I could see nothing of that kind, not even an ash-tree in the neighbourhood. Still the shadow remained; not steady, but moving to and fro, and once I saw the fingers close, and grind themselves close, like the claws of a wild animal, as if in uncontrollable longing for some anticipated prey. There seemed but one mode left of discovering the substance of this shadow. I went forward boldly, though with an inward shudder which I would not heed, to the spot where the shadow lay, threw myself on the ground, laid my head within the form of the hand, and turned my eyes towards the moon. Good heavens! what did I see? I wonder that ever I arose, and that the very shadow of the hand did not hold me where I lay until fear had frozen my brain. I saw the strangest figure; vague, shadowy, almost transparent, in the central parts, and gradually deepening in substance towards the outside, until it ended in extremities capable of casting such a shadow as fell from the hand through the awful fingers of which I now saw the moon. The hand was uplifted in the attitude of a paw about to strike its prey. But the face, which throbbed with fluctuating and pulsatory visibility—not from changes in the light it reflected, but from changes in its own conditions of reflecting power, the alterations being from within, not from without—it was horrible. I do not know how to describe it. It caused a new sensation. Just as one cannot translate a horrible odour, or a ghastly pain, or a fearful sound, into words, so I cannot describe this new form of awful hideousness. I can only try to describe something that is not it, but seems somewhat parallel to it; or at least is suggested by it. It reminded me of what I had heard of vampires;[15] for the face resembled that of a corpse more than anything else I can think of; especially when I can conceive such a face in motion, but not suggesting any life as the source of the motion. The features were rather handsome than otherwise, except the mouth, which had scarcely a curve in it. The lips were of equal thickness; but the thickness was not at all remarkable, even although they looked slightly swollen. They seemed fixedly open, but were not wide apart. Of course I did not *remark* these lineaments at the time: I was too horrified for that. I noted them afterwards, when the form returned on my inward sight with a vividness too intense to admit of my doubting the accuracy of the reflex. But the most awful of the features were the eyes. These were alive, yet not with life. They seemed lighted up with an infinite greed. A gnawing voracity, which devoured the devourer, seemed to be the indwelling and propelling power of the whole ghostly apparition. I lay for a few moments simply imbruted with terror; when another cloud, obscuring the moon, delivered me from the immediately paralysing effects of the presence to the vision of the object of horror, while it added the force of imagination to the power of fear within me; inasmuch as, knowing far worse cause for apprehension than before, I remained equally ignorant from what I had to defend myself, or how to take any precautions: he might be upon me in the darkness any moment. I sprang to my feet, and sped I knew not whither, only away from the spectre. I thought no longer of the path, and often narrowly escaped dashing myself against a tree, in my headlong flight of fear.

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[12] To signify or express; also refers to something ominous.

[13] Anodos's conflicting feeling of joy and fear in this chapter reflects Edmund Burke's notion of the sublime, which was central to the Romantic imagination. In *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756) Burke defines the sublime as encapsulating beauty and terror simultaneously, what MacDonald would describe as "beautiful terrors" in his final fantasy novel *Lilith* (1895).

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[14] In the 1905 edition, Arthur Hughes illustrates this large hand and the shadow that it casts, thus preparing the way for Anodos to encounter his own shadow in chapter 8. See Appendix E for the illustration.

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[15] Vampires were part of the popular mythology during the Victorian age. Given vocalization by John Polidori in *The Vampyre; A Tale* (1819), other writers quickly embraced the myth in gothic stories. The most famous works in the nineteenth century include James Malcolm Rymer's *Varney the Vampire: Or, the Feast of Blood* (1847), Sheridan Le Fanu's "Carmilla" (1872), and the most popular, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). MacDonald uses vampire allusions in *Lilith* (1895), and he would have been aware of Coleridge's unfinished poem "Christabel" (1797; 1800) that plays with vampire imagery and is probably a central influence on "Carmilla." Karl Marx in *Capital*, vol. 1 (1867) writes: "Capital is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks."

Great drops of rain began to patter on the leaves. Thunder began to mutter, then growl in the distance. I ran on. The rain fell heavier. At length the thick leaves could hold it up no longer; and, like a second firmament, they poured their torrents on the earth. I was soon drenched, but that was nothing. I came to a small swollen stream that rushed through the woods. I had a vague hope that if I crossed this stream, I should be in safety from my pursuer; but I soon found that my hope was as false as it was vague. I dashed across the stream, ascended a rising ground, and reached a more open space, where stood only great trees. Through them I directed my way, holding eastward as nearly as I could guess, but not at all certain that I was not moving in an opposite direction. My mind was just reviving a little from its extreme terror, when, suddenly, a flash of lightning, or rather a cataract of successive flashes, behind me, seemed to throw on the ground in front of me, but far more faintly than before, from the extent of the source of the light, the shadow of the same horrible hand. I sprang forward, stung to yet wilder speed; but had not run many steps before my foot slipped, and, vainly attempting to recover myself, I fell at the foot of one of the large trees. Half-stunned, I yet raised myself, and almost involuntarily looked back. All I saw was the hand within three feet of my face. But, at the same moment, I felt two large soft arms thrown round me from behind; and a voice like a woman's said: "Do not fear the goblin; he dares not hurt you now." With that, the hand was suddenly withdrawn as from a fire, and disappeared in the darkness and the rain. Overcome with the mingling of terror and joy, I lay for some time almost insensible. The first thing I remember is the sound of a voice above me, full and low, and strangely reminding me of the sound of a gentle wind amidst the leaves of a great tree. It murmured over and over again: "I may love him, I may love him; for he is a man, and I am only a beech-tree." I found I was seated on the ground, leaning against a human form, and supported still by the arms around me, which I knew to be those of a woman who must be rather above the human size, and largely proportioned. I turned my head, but without moving otherwise, for I feared lest the arms should untwine themselves; and clear, somewhat mournful eyes met mine. At least that is how they impressed me; but I could see very little of colour or outline as we sat in the dark and rainy shadow of the tree. The face seemed very lovely, and solemn from its stillness; with the aspect of one who is quite content, but waiting for something. I saw my conjecture from her arms was correct: she was above the human scale throughout, but not greatly.

"Why do you call yourself a beech-tree?" I said.

"Because I am one," she replied, in the same low, musical, murmuring voice.

"You are a woman," I returned.

"Do you think so? Am I very like a woman then?"

"You are a very beautiful woman. Is it possible you should not know it?"

"I am very glad you think so. I fancy I feel like a woman sometimes. I do so to-night—and always when the rain drips from my hair. For there is an old prophecy in our woods that one day we shall all be men and women like you. Do you know anything about it in your region? Shall I be very happy when I am a woman? I fear not; for it is always in nights like these that I feel like one. But I long to be a woman for all that."

I had let her talk on, for her voice was like a solution of all musical sounds. I now told her that I could hardly say whether women were happy or not. I knew one who had not been happy; and for my part, I had often longed for Fairy Land, as she now longed for the world of men. But then neither of us had lived long, and perhaps people grew happier as they grew older. Only I doubted it. I could not help sighing. She felt the sigh, for her arms were still round me. She asked me how old I was.

"Twenty-one," said I.

"Why, you baby!" said she; and kissed me with the sweetest kiss of winds and odours. There was a cool faithfulness in the kiss that revived my heart wonderfully. I felt that I feared the dreadful Ash no more.

"What did the horrible Ash want with me?" I said.

"I am not quite sure, but I think he wants to bury you at the foot of his tree. But he shall not touch you, my child."

"Are all the ash-trees as dreadful as he?"

"Oh, no. They are all disagreeable selfish creatures—(what horrid men they will make, if it be true!) but this one has a hole in his heart that nobody knows of but one or two; and he is always trying to fill it up, but he cannot. That must be what he wanted you for. I wonder if he will ever be a man. If he is, I hope they will kill him."

"How kind of you to save me from him!"

"I will take care that he shall not come near you again. But there are some in the wood more like me, from whom, alas! I cannot protect you. Only if you see any of them very beautiful, try to walk round them."

"What then?"

"I cannot tell you more. But now I must tie some of my hair about you, and then the Ash will not touch you. Here, cut some off. You men have strange cutting things about you."

She shook her long hair loose over me, never moving her arms.

"I cannot cut your beautiful hair. It would be a shame."

"Not cut my hair! It will have grown long enough before any is wanted again in this wild forest. Perhaps it may never be of any use again—not till I am a woman." And she sighed.

As gently as I could, I cut with a knife a long tress of flowing, dark hair, she hanging her beautiful head over me. When I had finished, she shuddered and breathed deep, as one does when an acute pain, steadfastly endured without sign of suffering, is at length relaxed. She then took the hair and tied it round me, singing a strange sweet song, which I could not understand, but which left in me a feeling like this—

"I saw thee ne'er before;
I see thee never more;
But love, and help, and pain, beautiful one,
Have made thee mine, till all my years are done."

I cannot put more of it into words. She closed her arms about me again, and went on singing. The rain in the leaves, and a light wind that had arisen, kept her song company. I was wrapt in a trance of still delight. It told me the secret of the woods, and the flowers, and the birds. At one time I felt as if I was wandering in childhood through sunny spring forests, over carpets of primroses, anemones, and little white starry things—I had almost said, creatures, and finding new wonderful flowers at every turn. At another, I lay half dreaming in the hot summer noon, with a book of old tales beside me, beneath a great beech; or, in autumn, grew sad because I trod on the leaves that had sheltered me, and received their last blessing in the sweet odours of decay; or, in a winter evening, frozen-still, looked up, as I went home to a warm fire-side, through the netted boughs and twigs to the cold, snowy moon, with her opal zone around her. At last I had fallen asleep; for I know nothing more that passed, till I found myself lying under a superb beech-tree, in the clear light of the morning, just before sunrise. Around me was a girdle of fresh beech-leaves. Alas! I brought nothing with me out of Fairy Land, but memories—memories. The great boughs of the beech hung drooping around me. At my head rose its smooth stem, with its great sweeps of curving surface that swelled like undeveloped limbs. The leaves and branches above kept on the song which had sung me asleep; only now, to my mind, it sounded like a farewell and a speedwell. I sat a long time, unwilling to go; but my unfinished story urged me on. I must act and wander. With the sun well risen, I rose, and put my arms as far as they would reach around the beech-tree, and kissed it, and said goodbye. A trembling went through the leaves; a few of the last drops of the night's rain fell from off them at my feet; and as I walked slowly away, I seemed to hear in a whisper once more the words: "I may love him, I may love him; for he is a man, and I am only a beech-tree."[16]

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[16] The beech-tree's transformation into a woman prepares Anodos for the Marble Lady in chapter 5 and reinforces the theme of unrequited love and loss. The beech tree is important in mythology: the beech is often known as the Beech Queen who is in love with the Oak King. In Celtic mythology, Fagus is a beech tree who protects children and the unborn.

Chapter V

And she was smooth and full, as if one gush
Of life had washed her, or as if a sleep
Lay on her eyelid, easier to sweep
Than bee from daisy.

BEDDOES' *Pygmalion.*[1]

Sche was as whyt as lylye yn May,
Or snow that sneweth yn wynterys day.

Romance of Sir Launfal.[2]

I walked on, in the fresh morning air, as if new-born. The only thing that damped my pleasure, was a cloud of something between sorrow and delight, that crossed my mind with the frequently returning thought of my last night's hostess. "But then," thought I, "if she is sorry, I could not help it; and she has all the pleasures she ever had. Such a day as this, is surely a joy to her, as much at least as to me. And her life will perhaps be the richer, for holding now within it the memory of what came, but could not stay. And if ever she is a woman, who knows but we may meet somewhere? there is plenty of room for meeting in the universe." Comforting myself thus, yet with a vague compunction,[3] as if I ought not to have left her, I went on. There was little to distinguish the woods to-day from those of my own land; except that all the wild things, rabbits, birds, squirrels, mice, and the numberless other inhabitants, were very tame; that is, they did not run away from me, but gazed at me as I passed, frequently coming nearer, as if to examine me more closely. Whether this came from utter ignorance, or from familiarity with the human appearance of beings who never hurt them, I could not tell. As I stood once, looking up to the splendid flower of a parasite, which hung from the branch of a tree over my head, a large white rabbit[4] cantered slowly up, put one of its little feet on one of mine, and looked up at me with its red eyes, just as I had been looking up at the flower above me. I stooped and stroked it; but when I attempted to lift it, it banged the ground with its hind feet, and scampered off at a great rate, turning, however, to look at me, several times before I lost sight of it. Now and then, too, a dim human figure would appear and disappear, at some distance, amongst the trees, moving like a sleep-walker. But no one ever came near me.

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[1] Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803-1849) was a Romantic poet intensely focused on death. His poem "Pygmalion" (1825) recounts the myth of the Cypriot sculptor who fell in love with the statue he carved. In this chapter, MacDonald echoes this myth.

[2] A medieval poem telling of a knight who loses status and wealth and who meets a beautiful woman who gives him love and wealth as long as he keeps her existence a secret. The motif of the lover's prohibition appears in several medieval texts, and MacDonald makes use of this motif in this chapter.

[3] Feeling that one has done something wrong, pang of conscience, anxiety over wrong-doing.

This day I found plenty of food in the forest—strange nuts and fruits I had never seen before. I hesitated to eat them; but argued that, if I could live on the air of Fairy Land, I could live on its food also. I found my reasoning correct, and the result was better than I had hoped; for it not only satisfied my hunger, but operated in such a way upon my senses that I was brought into far more complete relationship with the things around me. The human forms appeared much more dense and defined; more tangibly visible, if I may say so. I seemed to know better which direction to choose when any doubt arose. I began to feel in some degree what the birds meant in their songs, though I could not express it in words, any more than you can some landscapes. At times, to my surprise, I found myself listening attentively, and as if it were no unusual thing with me, to a conversation between two squirrels or monkeys. The subjects were not very interesting, except as associated with the individual life and necessities of the little creatures: where the best nuts were to be found in the neighbourhood, and who could crack them best, or who had most laid up for the winter, and such like; only they never said where the store was. There was no great difference in kind between their talk and our ordinary human conversation. Some of the creatures I never heard speak at all, and believe they never do so, except under the impulse of some great excitement. The mice talked; but the hedgehogs seemed very phlegmatic; and though I met a couple of moles above ground several times, they never said a word to each other in my hearing. There were no wild beasts in the forest; at least, I did not see one larger than a wild cat. There were plenty of snakes, however, and I do not think they were all harmless; but none ever bit me.[5]

Soon after mid-day, I arrived at a bare rocky hill, of no great size, but very steep; and, having no trees—scarcely even a bush—upon it, entirely exposed to the heat of the sun. Over this my way seemed to lie, and I immediately began the ascent. On reaching the top, hot and weary, I looked around me, and saw that the forest still stretched as far as the sight could reach on every side of me. I observed that the trees, in the direction in which I was about to descend, did not come so near the foot of the hill as on the other side, and was especially regretting the unexpected postponement of shelter, because this side of the hill seemed more difficult to descend than the other had been to climb, when my eye caught the appearance of a natural path, winding down through broken rocks and along the course of a tiny stream, which I hoped would lead me more easily to the foot. I tried it, and found the descent not at all laborious; nevertheless, when I reached the bottom, I was very tired, and exhausted with the heat. But just where the path seemed to end, rose a great rock, quite overgrown with shrubs and creeping plants, some of them in full and splendid blossom: these almost concealed an opening in the rock, into which the path appeared to lead. I entered, thirsting for the shade which it promised. What was my delight to find a rocky cell, all the angles rounded away with rich moss, and every ledge and projection crowded with lovely ferns, the variety of whose forms, and groupings, and shades wrought in me like a poem; for such a harmony could not exist, except they all consented to some one end! A little well of the clearest water filled a mossy hollow in one corner. I drank, and felt as if I knew what the elixir of life must be; then threw myself on a mossy mound that lay like a couch along the inner end. Here I lay in a delicious reverie for some time; during which all lovely forms, and colours, and sounds seemed to use my brain as a common hall, where they could come and go, unbidden and unexcused. I had never imagined that such capacity for simple happiness lay in me, as was now awakened by this assembly of forms and spiritual sensations, which yet were far too vague to admit of being translated into any shape common to my own and another mind. I had lain for an hour, I should suppose, though it may have been far longer, when, the harmonious tumult in my mind having somewhat relaxed, I became aware that my eyes were fixed on a strange, time-worn bas-relief on the rock opposite to me. This, after some pondering, I concluded to represent Pygmalion, as he awaited the quickening of his statue. The sculptor sat more rigid than the

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[4] Precursor to Lewis Carroll's white rabbit in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.* See note 8, chapter 3.

[5] The description of the forest with its benign beasts is Edenic. And in keeping with the theme of Eden, the forest has snakes. Later the landscape will become "Nature, red in tooth and claw" (from Tennyson's *In Memoriam A. H. H.* (1850),

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which anticipated Darwin's "survival of the fittest" (a phrase coined by Herbert Spencer in 1864 after reading Darwin's theories in various treatises).

figure to which his eyes were turned. That seemed about to step from its pedestal and embrace the man, who waited rather than expected.[6]

"A lovely story," I said to myself. "This cave, now, with the bushes cut away from the entrance to let the light in, might be such a place as he would choose, withdrawn from the notice of men, to set up his block of marble, and mould into a visible body the thought already clothed with form in the unseen hall of the sculptor's brain. And, indeed, if I mistake not," I said, starting up, as a sudden ray of light arrived at that moment through a crevice in the roof, and lighted up a small portion of the rock, bare of vegetation, "this very rock is marble, white enough and delicate enough for any statue, even if destined to become an ideal woman in the arms of the sculptor."

I took my knife and removed the moss from a part of the block on which I had been lying; when, to my surprise, I found it more like alabaster than ordinary marble, and soft to the edge of the knife. In fact, it was alabaster.[7] By an inexplicable, though by no means unusual kind of impulse, I went on removing the moss from the surface of the stone; and soon saw that it was polished, or at least smooth, throughout. I continued my labour; and after clearing a space of about a couple of square feet, I observed what caused me to prosecute the work with more interest and care than before. For the ray of sunlight had now reached the spot I had cleared, and under its lustre the alabaster revealed its usual slight transparency when polished, except where my knife had scratched the surface; and I observed that the transparency seemed to have a definite limit, and to end upon an opaque body like the more solid, white marble. I was careful to scratch no more. And first, a vague anticipation gave way to a startling sense of possibility; then, as I proceeded, one revelation after another produced the entrancing conviction, that under the crust of alabaster lay a dimly visible form in marble, but whether of man or woman I could not yet tell. I worked on as rapidly as the necessary care would permit; and when I had uncovered the whole mass, and rising from my knees, had retreated a little way, so that the effect of the whole might fall on me, I saw before me with sufficient plainness—though at the same time with considerable indistinctness, arising from the limited amount of light the place admitted, as well as from the nature of the object itself—a block of pure alabaster enclosing the form, apparently in marble, of a reposing woman. She lay on one side, with her hand under her cheek, and her face towards me; but her hair had fallen partly over her face, so that I could not see the expression of the whole. What I did see, appeared to me perfectly lovely; more near the face that had been born with me in my soul, than anything I had seen before in nature or art. The actual outlines of the rest of the form were so indistinct, that the more than semi-opacity of the alabaster seemed insufficient to account for the fact; and I conjectured that a light robe added its obscurity. Numberless histories passed through my mind of change of substance from enchantment and other causes, and of imprisonments such as this before me. I thought of the Prince of the Enchanted City, half marble and half a living man; of Ariel; of Niobe; of the Sleeping Beauty in the Wood; of the bleeding trees; and many other histories.[8] Even my adventure of the preceding evening with the lady of the beech-tree contributed to arouse the wild hope, that by some means life might be given to this form also, and that, breaking from her alabaster tomb, she might glorify my eyes with her presence. "For," I argued, "who can tell but this cave may be the home of Marble, and this, essential Marble—that spirit of marble which, present throughout, makes it capable of being moulded into any form?[9] Then if she should awake! But how to awake her? A kiss awoke the Sleeping Beauty: a kiss cannot reach her through the incrusting alabaster." I kneeled, however, and kissed the pale coffin; but she slept on. I bethought me of Orpheus,[10] and the following stones;—that trees should follow his music seemed nothing surprising now. Might not a song awake this form, that the glory of motion might for a time displace the loveliness of rest? Sweet sounds can go where kisses may not enter. I sat and thought.

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[6] The paragraph describes what can only be an erotic experience for Anodos. In Romantic fashion, he associates the erotic with the poetic and completes his description with a reference to Pygmalion, the Cypriot sculptor who carved a woman so beautiful that she came alive to satisfy his desires. Here Anodos sees Pygmalion and his creation carved on a bas-relief, that is, a wall carving in which the figures are raised from the flat surface.

[7] Smooth, white, granular form of gypsum, easily carved.

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[8] Prince of the Enchanted City refers to the story "The Story of the Young King of the Black Isles," the twenty-fifth story in *The Arabian Nights' Entertainment: Consisting of One Thousand and One Stories* (1827). Ariel is the fairy-like spirit in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1610-1611); Prospero saved Ariel who had been imprisoned in a tree by Sycorax. Niobe is a grieving mother who not only loses her children because she affronted the gods, but also is turned into a rock on Mount Sipylus. Sleeping Beauty is the character from the well-known fairy tale by Charles Perrault (1697); she rouses from a long sleep to find a handsome Prince ready to marry her. In Dante's *Inferno* (1308-1320), Canto 13, Dante and Virgil enter a dark wood. The trees here contain human spirits, and when Dante pulls a limb from a tree, the tree bleeds. The stories Anodos refers to involve entrapment of one kind or another. They also represent a range of stories and sources to emphasize the ubiquity and importance of story.

[9] Anodos echoes the Platonic idea that what the senses perceive is an adumbration of the perfect form, the ideal form. The woman Anodos perceives within the marble is his idea of the perfect woman, or so he thinks.

Now, although always delighting in music, I had never been gifted with the power of song, until I entered the fairy forest. I had a voice, and I had a true sense of sound; but when I tried to sing, the one would not content the other, and so I remained silent. This morning, however, I had found myself, ere I was aware, rejoicing in a song; but whether it was before or after I had eaten of the fruits of the forest,[11] I could not satisfy myself. I concluded it was after, however; and that the increased impulse to sing I now felt, was in part owing to having drunk of the little well, which shone like a brilliant eye in a corner of the cave. I sat down on the ground by the "antenatal tomb,"[12] leaned upon it with my face towards the head of the figure within, and sang—the words and tones coming together, and inseparably connected, as if word and tone formed one thing; or, as if each word could be uttered only in that tone, and was incapable of distinction from it, except in idea, by an acute analysis. I sang something like this: but the words are only a dull representation of a state whose very elevation precluded the possibility of remembrance; and in which I presume the words really employed were as far above these, as that state transcended this wherein I recall it:

"Marble woman, vainly sleeping
In the very death of dreams!
Wilt thou—slumber from thee sweeping,
All but what with vision teems—
Hear my voice come through the golden
Mist of memory and hope;

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[10] Greek poet who charmed nature with his music. A warning to Anodos lurks in the story of Orpheus who attempted to retrieve his love, Eurydice, from the underworld, but lost her when he looked back to see if she was with him.

[11] Reference perhaps to magical food that attunes Anodos to his world and gives him the gift of song. The phrase also echoes the biblical Garden of Eden and the prohibition.

[12] Pregnant tomb. Anodos speaks of the block of marble as if it was both a tomb (a place for the dead) and a womb (a place from which new life springs). The marble is pregnant with the form within, the form Anodos wishes to release or to aid in its birth. The womb/tomb association indicates just how close the connection is between life and death in MacDonald's mind.

And with shadowy smile embolden
Me with primal Death to cope?

"Thee the sculptors all pursuing,
Have embodied but their own;
Round their visions, form induing,
Marble vestments thou hast thrown;
But thyself, in silence winding,
Thou hast kept eternally;
Thee they found not, many finding—
I have found thee: wake for me."[13]

As I sang, I looked earnestly at the face so vaguely revealed before me. I fancied, yet believed it to be but fancy, that through the dim veil of the alabaster, I saw a motion of the head as if caused by a sinking sigh. I gazed more earnestly, and concluded that it was but fancy. Nevertheless I could not help singing again:

"Rest is now filled full of beauty,
And can give thee up, I ween;
Come thou forth, for other duty:
Motion pineth for her queen.

"Or, if needing years to wake thee
From thy slumbrous solitudes,
Come, sleep-walking, and betake thee
To the friendly, sleeping woods.

"Sweeter dreams are in the forest;
Round thee storms would never rave;
And when need of rest is sorest,
Glide thou then into thy cave.

"Or, if still thou choosest rather
Marble, be its spell on me;
Let thy slumber round me gather,
Let another dream with thee!"

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[13] Anodos has the vanity to presume he has found the ideal beauty, the Platonic form of womanhood. His is the height of hubris.

Again I paused, and gazed through the stony shroud,[14] as if, by very force of penetrative sight, I would clear every lineament[15] of the lovely face. And now I thought the hand that had lain under the cheek, had slipped a little downward. But then I could not be sure that I had at first observed its position accurately. So I sang again; for the longing had grown into a passionate need of seeing her alive:

"Or art thou Death, O woman? for since I
  Have set me singing by thy side,
Life hath forsook the upper sky,
  And all the outer world hath died.

"Yea, I am dead; for thou hast drawn
  My life all downward unto thee.
Dead moon of love! let twilight dawn;
  Awake! and let the darkness flee.

"Cold lady of the lovely stone!
  Awake! or I shall perish here;
And thou be never more alone,
  My form and I for ages near.

"But words are vain; reject them all—
  They utter but a feeble part:
Hear thou the depths from which they call,
  The voiceless longing of my heart."

There arose a slightly crashing[16] sound. Like a sudden apparition that comes and is gone, a white form, veiled in a light robe of whiteness, burst upwards from the stone, stood, glided forth, and gleamed away towards the woods. For I followed to the mouth of the cave, as soon as the amazement and concentration of delight permitted the nerves of motion again to act;[17] and saw the white form amidst the trees, as it crossed a little glade on the edge of the forest where the sunlight fell full, seeming to gather with intenser radiance on the one object that floated rather than flitted through its lake of beams. I gazed after her in a kind of despair; found, freed, lost! It seemed useless to follow, yet follow I must. I marked the direction she took; and without once looking round to the forsaken cave, I hastened towards the forest.

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[14] Winding sheet for the dead. *Phantastes* is much concerned with death, or what C. S. Lewis called "*good* death." See *George MacDonald: 365 Readings*, Collier, 1947, xxxiii.

[15] Feature or characteristic. The word brings to mind a stanza from the early Notebooks of William Blake: "What is it men in women do require? / The lineaments of Gratified Desire / What is it women do in men require? / The lineaments of Gratified Desire." Notebook housed in the British Library.

[16] "Slightly crashing" is an example of MacDonald's clever use of oxymoron or the use of two words that appear oddly paired. With oxymoron, we are close to paradox, perhaps the most often used rhetorical device in MacDonald and Romantic writing generally.

[17] Awkward manner of saying he followed the woman as soon as he recovered

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from the shock of seeing her emerge from the marble.

Chapter VI

> Ach, hüte sich doch ein Mensch, wenn seine erfüllten Wünschc auf ihn herad regnen, und er so über alle Maasse fröhlich ist!
>
> —FOUQUÉ, *Der Zauberring.*[1]

> Ah, let a man beware, when his wishes, fulfilled, rain down upon him, and his happiness is unbounded.

> Thy red lips, like worms,
> Travel over my cheek.
>
> MOTHERWELL.[2]

But as I crossed the space between the foot of the hill and the forest, a vision of another kind delayed my steps. Through an opening to the westward flowed, like a stream, the rays of the setting sun, and overflowed with a ruddy[3] splendour the open place where I was. And riding as it were down this stream towards me, came a horseman in what appeared red armour. From frontlet to tail, the horse likewise shone red in the sun-set. I felt as if I must have seen the knight before; but as he drew near, I could recall no feature of his countenance. Ere he came up to me, however, I remembered the legend of Sir Percival[4] in the rusty armour, which I had left unfinished in the old book in the cottage: it was of Sir Percival that he reminded me. And no wonder; for when he came close up to me, I saw that, from crest to heel, the whole surface of his armour was covered with a light rust. The golden spurs shone, but the iron greaves glowed in the sunlight. The *morning star,*[5] which hung from his wrist, glittered and glowed with its silver and bronze. His whole appearance was terrible; but his face did not answer to this appearance. It was sad, even to gloominess; and something of shame seemed to cover it. Yet it was noble and high, though thus beclouded; and the form looked lofty, although the head drooped, and the whole frame was bowed as with an inward grief. The horse[6] seemed to share in his master's dejection, and walked spiritless and slow. I noticed, too, that the white plume on his helmet was discoloured and drooping. "He has fallen in a joust with spears," I said to myself; "yet it becomes not a noble knight to be conquered in spirit because his body hath fallen." He appeared not to observe me, for he was riding past without looking up, and started into a warlike attitude the moment the first sound of my voice reached him. Then a flush, as of shame, covered all of his face that the lifted beaver disclosed. He returned my greeting with distant courtesy, and passed on. But suddenly, he reined up, sat a moment still, and then turning his horse, rode back to where I stood looking after him.

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[1] Fouqué, Friedrich Heinrich Karl de la Motte (1777-1843), is an important German writer who helped define German Romanticism. MacDonald cites Fouqué's *Undine* (1811) in "The Fantastic Imagination" as the ideal fairy tale. *Der Zauberring* (*The Magical Ring*, 1813) follows Otto and his cousin Bertha as they go on a series of adventures to find the magic ring. This work, critics argue, influenced not only MacDonald but William Morris, Richard Wagner, and J. R. R. Tolkien.

[2] From the poem "The Demon Lady" (1830), first published in *The Edinburgh Literary Journal.* William Motherwell (1797-1835) was a Scottish journalist and poet, as well as a collector of local Scottish ballads.

[3] To make red, often to make a face red with shame.

[4] A knight of the roundtable. See note 10, chapter 3.

[5] In this context a morning star is a medieval weapon, a ball studded with spikes,

"I am ashamed," he said, "to appear a knight, and in such a guise; but it behoves me to tell you to take warning from me, lest the same evil, in his kind, overtake the singer that has befallen the knight. Hast thou ever read the story of Sir Percival and the" (here he shuddered, that his armour rang)—"Maiden of the Alder-tree?"[7]

"In part, I have," said I; "for yesterday, at the entrance of this forest, I found in a cottage the volume wherein it is recorded."

"Then take heed," he rejoined; "for, see my armour;—I put it off; and as it befel to him, so has it befallen to me. I that was proud am humble now. Yet is she terribly beautiful—beware. Never," he added, raising his head, "shall this armour be furbished, but by the blows of knightly encounter, until the last speck has disappeared from every spot where the battle-axe and sword of evil-doers, or noble foes, might fall; when I shall again lift my head, and say to my squire, 'Do thy duty once more, and make this armour shine.'"

Before I could inquire further, he had struck spurs into his horse and galloped away, shrouded from my voice in the noise of his armour. For I called after him, anxious to know more about this

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attached to a club handle, often resembling a mace. The term also refers to Venus, the bright star, and refers to a person who will bring forth a new dawn or age.

[6] MacDonald was fond of horses and often included them in his fiction, his most famous being the horse Diamond in the fantasy *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871).

[7] The Maiden of the Alder is used as a femme fatale by MacDonald. One myth is that an alder tree, when cut, bleeds red, like a human, which paved the way for the negative image, at times, of the alder. See note 3, chapter 3.

fearful enchantress; but in vain—he heard me not. "Yet," I said to myself, "I have now been often warned; surely I shall be well on my guard; and I am fully resolved I shall not be ensnared by any beauty, however beautiful. Doubtless, some one man may escape, and I shall be he." So I went on into the wood, still hoping to find, in some one of its mysterious recesses, my lost lady of the marble. The sunny afternoon died into the loveliest twilight. Great bats began to flit about with their own noiseless flight, seemingly purposeless, because its objects are unseen. The monotonous music of the owl issued from all unexpected quarters in the half-darkness around me. The glow-worm was alight here and there, burning out into the great universe. The night-hawk heightened all the harmony and stillness with his oft-recurring, discordant jar. Numberless unknown sounds came out of the unknown dusk; but all were of twilight-kind, oppressing the heart as with a condensed atmosphere of dreamy undefined love and longing. The odours of night arose, and bathed me in that luxurious mournfulness peculiar to them, as if the plants whence they floated had been watered with bygone tears. Earth drew me towards her bosom; I felt as if I could fall down and kiss her. I forgot I was in Fairy Land, and seemed to be walking in a perfect night of our own old nursing earth. Great stems rose about me, uplifting a thick multitudinous[8] roof above me of branches, and twigs, and leaves—the bird and insect world uplifted over mine, with its own landscapes, its own thickets, and paths, and glades, and dwellings; its own bird-ways and insect-delights. Great boughs crossed my path; great roots based the tree-columns, and mightily clasped the earth, strong to lift and strong to uphold. It seemed an old, old forest, perfect in forest ways and pleasures. And when, in the midst of this ecstasy, I remembered that under some close canopy of leaves, by some giant stem, or in some mossy cave, or beside some leafy well, sat the lady of the marble, whom my songs had called forth into the outer world, waiting (might it not be?) to meet and thank her deliverer in a twilight which would veil her confusion, the whole night became one dream-realm of joy, the central form of which was everywhere present, although unbeheld. Then, remembering how my songs seemed to have called her from the marble, piercing through the pearly shroud of alabaster—"Why," thought I, "should not my voice reach her now, through the ebon[9] night that inwraps[10] her." My voice burst into song so spontaneously that it seemed involuntarily.

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[8] Large number, many.

[9] Dark; ebony is a black tree.

Not a sound
But, echoing in me,
Vibrates all around
With a blind delight,
Till it breaks on thee,
Queen of Night!

Every tree,
O'ershadowing with gloom,
Seems to cover thee
Secret, dark, love-still'd,
In a holy room
Silence-filled.

Let no moon
Creep up the heaven to-night;
I in darksome noon
Walking hopefully,
Seek my shrouded light—
Grope for thee!

Darker grow
The borders of the dark!
Through the branches glow!
From the roof above,
Star and diamond-spark,
Light for love.

Scarcely had the last sounds floated away from the hearing of my own ears, when I heard instead a low delicious laugh near me. It was not the laugh of one who would not be heard, but the laugh of one who has just received something long and patiently desired—a laugh that ends in a low musical moan. I started, and, turning sideways, saw a dim white figure seated beside an intertwining thicket of smaller trees and underwood.

"It is my white lady!" I said, and flung myself on the ground beside her; striving, through the gathering darkness, to get a glimpse of the form which had broken its marble prison at my call.

"It is your white lady!" said the sweetest voice, in reply, sending a thrill of speechless delight through a heart which all the love charms of the preceding day and evening had been tempering for this culminating hour. Yet, if I would have confessed it, there was something either in the sound of the voice, although it seemed sweetness itself, or else in this yielding which awaited no gradation of gentle approaches, that did not vibrate harmoniously with the beat of my inward music. And likewise, when, taking her hand in mine, I drew closer to her, looking for the beauty of her face, which, indeed, I found too plenteously, a cold shiver ran through me; but "it is the marble," I said to myself, and heeded it not.

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[10] To conceal.

She withdrew her hand from mine, and after that would scarce allow me to touch her. It seemed strange, after the fulness[11] of her first greeting, that she could not trust me to come close to her. Though her words were those of a lover, she kept herself withdrawn as if a mile of space interposed between us.

"Why did you run away from me when you woke in the cave?" I said.

"Did I?" she returned. "That was very unkind of me; but I did not know better."

"I wish I could see you. The night is very dark."

"So it is. Come to my grotto. There is light there."

"Have you another cave, then?"

"Come and see."

But she did not move until I rose first, and then she was on her feet before I could offer my hand to help her. She came close to my side, and conducted me through the wood. But once or twice, when, involuntarily almost, I was about to put my arm around her as we walked on through the warm gloom, she sprang away several paces, always keeping her face full towards me, and then stood looking at me, slightly stooping, in the attitude of one who fears some half-seen enemy. It was too dark to discern the expression of her face. Then she would return and walk close beside me again, as if nothing had happened. I thought this strange; but, besides that I had almost, as I said before, given up the attempt to account for appearances in Fairy Land, I judged that it would be very unfair to expect from one who had slept so long and had been so suddenly awakened, a behaviour correspondent to what I might unreflectingly look for. I knew not what she might have been dreaming about. Besides, it was possible that, while her words were free, her sense of touch might be exquisitely delicate.

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[11] An alternative spelling of *fullness* that was popular during the Victorian age. The OED cites C. H. Spurgeon, who wrote in *New Part Street Pulpit* (1858): "Hath He not made the heavens and the earth, the sea and the fulness thereof?"

At length, after walking a long way in the woods, we arrived at another thicket, through the intertexture of which was glimmering a pale rosy light.

"Push aside the branches," she said, "and make room for us to enter."

I did as she told me.

"Go in," she said; "I will follow you."

I did as she desired, and found myself in a little cave, not very unlike the marble cave. It was festooned and draperied with all kinds of green that cling to shady rocks. In the furthest corner, half-hidden in leaves, through which it glowed, mingling lovely shadows between them, burned a bright rosy flame on a little earthen lamp. The lady glided round by the wall from behind me, still keeping her face towards me, and seated herself in the furthest corner, with her back to the lamp, which she hid completely from my view. I then saw indeed a form of perfect loveliness before me. Almost it seemed as if the light of the rose-lamp shone through her (for it could not be reflected from her); such a delicate shade of pink seemed to shadow what in itself must be a marbly whiteness of hue. I discovered afterwards, however, that there was one thing in it I did not like; which was, that the white part of the eye was tinged with the same slight roseate hue as the rest of the form. It is strange that I cannot recall her features; but they, as well as her somewhat girlish figure, left on me simply and only the impression of intense loveliness. I lay down at her feet, and gazed up into her face as I lay.

She began, and told me a strange tale, which, likewise, I cannot recollect; but which, at every turn and every pause, somehow or other fixed my eyes and thoughts upon her extreme beauty; seeming always to culminate in something that had a relation, revealed or hidden, but always operative, with her own loveliness. I lay entranced. It was a tale which brings back a feeling as of snows and tempests; torrents and water-sprites; lovers parted for long, and meeting at last; with a gorgeous summer night to close up the whole. I listened till she and I were blended with the tale; till she and I were the whole history. And we had met at last in this same cave of greenery, while the summer night hung round us heavy with love, and the odours that crept through the silence from the sleeping woods were the only signs of an outer world that invaded our solitude. What followed I cannot clearly remember. The succeeding horror almost obliterated it. I woke as a grey dawn stole into the cave. The damsel had disappeared; but in the shrubbery at the mouth of the cave, stood a strange horrible object. It looked like an open coffin set up on one end; only that the part for the head and neck was defined from the shoulder-part. In fact it was a rough representation of the human frame, only hollow, as if made of decaying bark torn from a tree. It had arms, which were only slightly seamed, down from the shoulder-blade by the elbow, as if the bark had healed again from the cut of a knife. But the arms moved, and the hands and fingers were tearing asunder a long silky tress of hair. The thing turned round—it had for a face and front those of my enchantress, but now of a pale greenish hue in the light of the morning, and with dead lustreless eyes. In the horror of the moment, another fear invaded me. I put my hand to my waist, and found indeed that my girdle of beech-leaves was gone. Hair again in her hands, she was tearing it fiercely. Once more, as she turned, she laughed a low laugh, but now full of scorn and derision; and then she said, as if to a companion with whom she had been talking while I slept, "There he is; you can take him now." I lay still, petrified with dismay and fear; for I now saw another figure beside her, which, although vague and indistinct, I yet recognised but too well. It was the Ash-tree. My beauty was the Maid of the Alder! and she was giving me, spoiled of my only availing defence, into the hands of my awful foe.[12] The Ash bent his Gorgon-head,[13] and entered the cave. I could not stir. He drew near me. His ghoul-eyes and his ghastly face fascinated me. He came stooping, with the hideous hand outstretched, like a beast of prey. I had given myself up to a death of unfathomable horror, when, suddenly, and just as he was on the point of seizing me, the dull, heavy blow of an axe echoed through the wood, followed by others in quick repetition. The Ash shuddered and groaned, withdrew the outstretched hand, retreated backwards to the mouth of the cave, then turned and disappeared amongst the trees. The other walking Death looked at me once, with a careless dislike on her beautifully moulded features; then, heedless any more to conceal her hollow deformity, turned her frightful back and likewise vanished amid the green obscurity without. I lay and wept. The Maid of the Alder-tree had befooled me—nearly slain me—in spite of all the warnings I had received from those who knew my danger.

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[12] The woman with the laugh turns out to be Maiden of the Alder Tree. MacDonald is retelling John Keats's "Le Belle Dame Sans Merci" (1819), where a knight is seduced by a woman, led to her cave or grotto, and dreams a horrible dream of the fatal woman without pity. See Appendix C for poem.

[13] The gorgon is one of three sisters from Greek mythology who have snakes for hair; anyone looking at the gorgon is turned to stone.

Chapter VII

Fight on, my men, Sir Andrew sayes,
  little Ime hurt, but yett not slaine;
Ile but lye downe and bleede awhile,
  And then Ile rise and fight againe.
BALLAD of Sir Andrew Barton.[1]

But I could not remain where I was any longer, though the daylight was hateful to me, and the thought of the great, innocent, bold sunrise unendurable. Here there was no well to cool my face, smarting with the bitterness of my own tears. Nor would I have washed in the well of that grotto, had it flowed clear as the rivers of Paradise. I rose, and feebly left the sepulchral cave. I took my way I knew not whither, but still towards the sunrise. The birds were singing; but not for me. All the creatures spoke a language of their own, with which I had nothing to do, and to which I cared not to find the key any more. I walked listlessly along. What distressed me most—more even than my own folly—was the perplexing question—How can beauty and ugliness dwell so near? Even with her altered complexion and her face of dislike; disenchanted of the belief that clung around her; known for a living, walking sepulcher,[2] faithless, deluding, traitorous; I felt notwithstanding all this, that she was beautiful. Upon this I pondered with undiminished perplexity, though not without some gain. Then I began to make surmises as to the mode of my deliverance; and concluded that some hero, wandering in search of adventure, had heard how the forest was infested; and, knowing it was useless to attack the evil thing in person, had assailed with his battle-axe the body in which he dwelt, and on which he was dependent for his power of mischief in the wood. "Very likely," I thought, "the repentant knight, who warned me of the evil which has befallen me, was busy retrieving his lost honour, while I was sinking into the same sorrow with himself; and, hearing of the dangerous and mysterious being, arrived at his tree in time to save me from being dragged to its roots, and buried like carrion, to nourish him for yet deeper insatiableness." I found afterwards that my conjecture was correct. I wondered how he had fared when his blows recalled the Ash himself, and that too I learned afterwards.

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[1] "Ballad of Sir Andrew Barton" dates from the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. It appears in the eighteenth-century collection of ballads and popular songs edited by Thomas Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). Sir Andrew Barton was a Scottish sea captain who engaged in a sea battle with two English ships. He was killed in the altercation, but became famous for his bravery.

[2] Tomb or vault for the dead. Anodos thinks of the woman as a walking death. Another example of oxymoron.

I walked on the whole day, with intervals of rest, but without food; for I could not have eaten, had any been offered me; till, in the afternoon, I seemed to approach the outskirts of the forest, and at length arrived at a farm-house. An unspeakable joy arose in my heart at beholding an abode of human beings once more, and I hastened up to the door, and knocked. A kind-looking, matronly woman, still handsome, made her appearance; who, as soon as she saw me, said kindly, "Ah, my poor boy, you have come from the wood! Were you in it last night?"

I should have ill endured, the day before, to be called *boy*; but now the motherly kindness of the word went to my heart; and, like a boy indeed, I burst into tears. She soothed me right gently; and, leading me into a room, made me lie down on a settle,[3] while she went to find me some refreshment. She soon returned with food, but I could not eat. She almost compelled me to swallow some wine, when I revived sufficiently to be able to answer some of her questions. I told her the whole story.

"It is just as I feared," she said; "but you are now for the night beyond the reach of any of these dreadful creatures. It is no wonder they could delude a child like you. But I must beg you, when my husband comes in, not to say a word about these things; for he thinks me even half crazy for believing anything of the sort. But I must believe my senses, as he cannot believe beyond his, which give him no intimations of this kind. I think he could spend the whole of Midsummer-eve in the wood and come back with the report that he saw nothing worse than himself. Indeed, good man, he would hardly find anything better than himself, if he had seven more senses given him."

"But tell me how it is that she could be so beautiful without any heart at all—without any place even for a heart to live in."

"I cannot quite tell," she said; "but I am sure she would not look so beautiful if she did not take means to make herself look more beautiful than she is. And then, you know, you began by being in love with her before you saw her beauty, mistaking her for the lady of the marble—another kind altogether, I should think. But the chief thing that makes her beautiful is this: that, although she loves no man, she loves the love of any man; and when she finds one in her power, her desire to bewitch him and gain his love, (not for the sake of his love either, but that she may be conscious anew of her own beauty, through the admiration he manifests) makes her very lovely—with a self-destructive beauty, though; for it is that which is constantly wearing her away within, till, at last, the decay will reach her face, and her whole front, when all the lovely mask of nothing will fall to pieces, and she be vanished for ever. So a wise man, whom she met in the wood some years ago, and who, I think, for all his wisdom, fared no better than you, told me, when, like you, he spent the next night here, and recounted to me his adventures."

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[3] Wooden seat for two or more people, with a high back and arms.

I thanked her very warmly for her solution, though it was but partial; wondering much that in her, as in woman I met on my first entering the forest, there should be such superiority to her apparent condition. Here she left me to take some rest; though, indeed, I was too much agitated to rest in any other way than by simply ceasing to move.

In half an hour, I heard a heavy step approach and enter the house. A jolly voice, whose slight huskiness appeared to proceed from overmuch laughter, called out: "Betsy,[4] the pigs' trough is quite empty, and that is a pity. Let them swill, lass! They're of no use but to get fat. Ha! ha! ha! Gluttony is not forbidden in their commandments.[5] Ha! ha! ha!" The very voice, kind and jovial, seemed to disrobe the room of the strange look which all new places wear—to disenchant it out of the realm of the ideal into that of the actual. It began to look as if I had known every corner of it for twenty years; and when, soon after, the dame came and fetched me to partake of their early supper, the grasp of his great hand, and the harvest-moon of his benevolent face, which was needed to light up the rotundity of the globe beneath it, produced such a reaction in me, that, for a moment, I could hardly believe that there was a Fairy Land; and that all I had passed through since I left home, had not been the wandering dream of a diseased imagination, operating on a too mobile frame, not merely causing me indeed to travel, but peopling for me with vague phantoms the regions through which my actual steps had led me. But the next moment, my eye fell upon a little girl who was sitting in the chimney corner, with a little book open on her knee, from which she had apparently just looked up to fix great inquiring eyes upon me. I believed in Fairy Land again. She went on with her reading, as soon as she saw that I observed her looking at me. I went near, and peeping over her shoulder, saw that she was reading *The History of Graciosa and Percinet.*[6]

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[4] Betsy, diminutive of Elizabeth ("oath of God"). Elizabeth is the mother of John the Baptist (see Luke 1: 56-64).

[5] "Gluttony is not forbidden in their commandments" reflects that gluttony is not specifically forbidden in the 10 commandments (see Exodus 20:1-17). It is, however, one of the Seven Deadly Sins, a list of sins adopted by the early Church.

"Very improving book, sir," remarked the old farmer, with a good-humoured laugh. "We are in the very hottest corner of Fairy Land here. Ha! ha! Stormy night, last night, sir."

"Was it, indeed?" I rejoined. "It was not so with me. A lovelier night I never saw." "Indeed! Where were you last night?"

"I spent it in the forest. I had lost my way."

"Ah! then, perhaps, you will be able to convince my good woman, that there is nothing very remarkable about the forest; for, to tell the truth, it bears but a bad name in these parts. I dare say you saw nothing worse than yourself there?"

"I hope I did," was my inward reply; but, for an audible one, I contented myself with saying, "Why, I certainly did see some appearances I could hardly account for; but that is nothing to be wondered at in an unknown wild forest, and with the uncertain light of the moon alone to go by."

"Very true! you speak like a sensible man, sir. We have but few sensible folks round about us. Now, you would hardly credit it, but my wife believes every fairy-tale that ever was written. I cannot account for it. She is a most sensible woman in everything else."[7]

"But should not that make you treat her belief with something of respect, though you cannot share in it yourself?"

"Yes, that is all very well in theory; but when you come to live every day in the midst of absurdity, it is far less easy to behave respectfully to it. Why, my wife actually believes the story of the 'White Cat.'[8] You know it, I dare say."

"I read all these tales when a child, and know that one especially well."

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[6] French literary fairy tale by Madame D'Aulnoy (1697). In the tale, Percinet, a page with fairy power, aids the lovely Princess Graciosa who is tormented with various tasks by her stepmother.

[7] As in *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872), MacDonald associates the masculine with reason and sense and the feminine with imagination and emotion.

[8] Another of Madame D'Aulnoy's stories, this one about a bewitched princess who has taken the form of a white cat. The youngest of three brothers is kind to the cat and she helps him complete his quest. Restored to her human form once the youngest brother cuts off the cat's head, the princess marries the youngest brother.

"But, father," interposed the little girl in the chimney-corner, "you know quite well that mother is descended from that very princess who was changed by the wicked fairy into a white cat. Mother has told me so a many times, and you ought to believe everything she says."

"I can easily believe that," rejoined the farmer, with another fit of laughter; "for, the other night, a mouse came gnawing and scratching beneath the floor, and would not let us go to sleep. Your mother sprang out of bed, and going as near it as she could, mewed so infernally like a great cat, that the noise ceased instantly. I believe the poor mouse died of the fright, for we have never heard it again. Ha! ha! ha!"

The son, an ill-looking youth, who had entered during the conversation, joined in his father's laugh; but his laugh was very different from the old man's: it was polluted with a sneer. I watched him, and saw that, as soon as it was over, he looked scared, as if he dreaded some evil consequences to follow his presumption. The woman stood near, waiting till we should seat ourselves at the table, and listening to it all with an amused air, which had something in it of the look with which one listens to the sententious remarks of a pompous child. We sat down to supper, and I ate heartily. My bygone distresses began already to look far off.

"In what direction are you going?" asked the old man.

"Eastward," I replied; nor could I have given a more definite answer. "Does the forest extend much further in that direction?"

"Oh! for miles and miles; I do not know how far. For although I have lived on the borders of it all my life, I have been too busy to make journeys of discovery into it. Nor do I see what I could discover. It is only trees and trees, till one is sick of them. By the way, if you follow the eastward track from here, you will pass close to what the children say is the very house of the ogre that Hop-o'-my-Thumb[9] visited, and ate his little daughters with the crowns of gold."

"Oh, father! ate his little daughters! No; he only changed their gold crowns for nightcaps; and the great long-toothed ogre killed them in mistake; but I do not think even he ate them, for you know they were his own little ogresses."

"Well, well, child; you know all about it a great deal better than I do. However, the house has, of course, in such a foolish neighbourhood as this, a bad enough name; and I must confess there is a woman living in it, with teeth long enough and white enough too for the lineal descendant of the greatest ogre that ever was made. I think you had better not go near her."

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[9] One of Charles Perrault's eight fairy tales in *Histoires ou Contes du temps passé* (1697). This is a grisly story in which an ogre sets out to eat little Hop-o'-my-Thumb and his brothers, but Hop-o' tricks the ogre into eating his own daughters.

In such talk as this the night wore on. When supper was finished, which lasted some time, my hostess conducted me to my chamber.

"If you had not had enough of it already," she said, "I would have put you in another room, which looks towards the forest; and where you would most likely have seen something more of its inhabitants. For they frequently pass the window, and even enter the room sometimes. Strange creatures spend whole nights in it, at certain seasons of the year. I am used to it, and do not mind it. No more does my little girl, who sleeps in it always. But this room looks southward towards the open country, and they never show themselves here; at least I never saw any."

I was somewhat sorry not to gather any experience that I might have, of the inhabitants of Fairy Land; but the effect of the farmer's company, and of my own later adventures, was such, that I chose rather an undisturbed night in my more human quarters; which, with their clean white curtains and white linen, were very inviting to my weariness.

In the morning, I awoke refreshed, after a profound and dreamless sleep. The sun was high, when I looked out of the window, shining over a wide, undulating, cultivated country. Various garden-vegetables were growing beneath my window. Everything was radiant with clear sunlight. The dew-drops were sparkling their busiest; the cows in a near-by field were eating as if they had not been at it all day yesterday; the maids were singing at their work as they passed to and fro between the out-houses: I did not believe in Fairy Land. I went down, and found the family already at breakfast. But before I entered the room where they sat, the little girl came to me, and looked up in my face, as though she wanted to say something to me. I stooped towards her; she put her arms round my neck, and her mouth to my ear, and whispered:—

"A white lady has been flitting about the house all night."

"No whispering behind doors!" cried the farmer; and we entered together. "Well, how have you slept? No bogies, eh?"

"Not one, thank you; I slept uncommonly well."

"I am glad to hear it. Come and breakfast."

After breakfast, the farmer and his son went out; and I was left alone with the mother and daughter.

"When I looked out of the window this morning," I said, "I felt almost certain that Fairy Land was all a delusion of my brain; but whenever I come near you or your little daughter, I feel differently. Yet I could persuade myself, after my last adventures, to go back, and have nothing more to do with such strange beings."

"How will you go back?" said the woman.

"Nay, that I do not know."

"Because I have heard, that, for those who enter Fairy Land, there is no way of going back. They must go on, and go through it. How, I do not in the least know."

"That is quite the impression on my own mind. Something compels me to go on, as if my only path was onward; but I feel less inclined this morning to continue my adventures."

"Will you come and see my little child's room? She sleeps in the one I told you of, looking towards the forest."

"Willingly," I said.

So we went together, the little girl running before to open the door for us. It was a large room, full of old-fashioned furniture, that seemed to have once belonged to some great house. The window was built with a low arch, and filled with lozenge-shaped panes.[10] The wall was very thick, and built of solid stone. I could see that part of the house had been erected against the remains of some old castle or abbey, or other great building; the fallen stones of which had probably served to complete it. But as soon as I looked out of the window, a gush of wonderment and longing flowed over my soul like the tide of a great sea. Fairy Land lay before me, and drew me towards it with an irresistible attraction.[11] The trees bathed their great heads in the waves of the morning, while their roots were planted deep in gloom; save where on the borders the sunshine broke against their stems, or swept in long streams through their avenues, washing with brighter hue all the leaves over which it flowed; revealing the rich brown of the decayed leaves and fallen pine-cones, and the delicate greens of the long grasses and tiny forests of moss that covered the channel over which it passed in motionless rivers of light. I turned hurriedly to bid my hostess farewell without further delay. She smiled at my haste, but with an anxious look.

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[10] Windows shaped like diamonds. A lozenge is a form of rhombus, or a four-sided shape each side being the same length.

[11] The longing Anodos describes is an example of what the German Romantic writers termed *Sehnsucht*. See, for example, Friedrich Schiller's poem, "Sehnsucht" or Novalis's poem, "Sehnsucht nach dem Tode" ("Longing for Death"). Fairy Land prompts an intense longing for something that has been missing in Anodos's life. See Appendix C for these poems.

"You had better not go near the house of the ogre, I think. My son will show you into another path, which will join the first beyond it."

Not wishing to be headstrong or too confident any more, I agreed; and having taken leave of my kind entertainers, went into the wood, accompanied by the youth. He scarcely spoke as we went along; but he led me through the trees till we struck upon a path. He told me to follow it, and, with a muttered 'good morning' left me.

Chapter VIII

> Ich bin ein Theil des Theils, der anfangs alles war.
>
> I am a part of the part, which at first was the whole.
>
> GOETHE.—*Mephistopheles* in *Faust*.[1]

My spirits rose as I went deeper into the forest; but I could not regain my former elasticity of mind. I found cheerfulness to be like life itself—not to be created by any argument. Afterwards I learned, that the best way to manage some kinds of painful thoughts, is to dare them to do their worst; to let them lie and gnaw at your heart till they are tired; and you find you still have a residue of life they cannot kill. So, better and worse, I went on, till I came to a little clearing in the forest. In the middle of this clearing stood a long, low hut, built with one end against a single tall cypress, which rose like a spire to the building. A vague misgiving crossed my mind when I saw it; but I must needs go closer, and look through a little half-open door, near the opposite end from the cypress. Window I saw none. On peeping in, and looking towards the further end, I saw a lamp burning, with a dim, reddish flame, and the head of a woman, bent downwards, as if reading by its light. I could see nothing more for a few moments. At length, as my eyes got used to the dimness of the place, I saw that the part of the rude building near me was used for household purposes; for several rough utensils lay here and there, and a bed stood in the corner. An irresistible attraction caused me to enter. The woman never raised her face, the upper part of which alone I could see distinctly; but, as soon as I stepped within the threshold, she began to read aloud, in a low and not altogether unpleasing voice, from an ancient little volume which she held open with one hand on the table upon which stood the lamp. What she read was something like this:

"So, then, as darkness had no beginning, neither will it ever have an end. So, then, is it eternal. The negation of aught else, is its affirmation. Where the light cannot come, there abideth the darkness.

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[1] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), was a German writer associated with the Sturm and Drang (Storm and Stress) literary movement. *Faust 1* (1806) has Mephistopheles, a minion for the devil, seduce Faust into selling his soul to the devil. Faust, in turn, seduces a young woman, ultimately destroying her. In *Faust 2* (1831), Faust goes on a series of adventures, meets some fairies, and finally atones for some of his sins and is able to enter Heaven.

The light doth but hollow a mine out of the infinite extension of the darkness. And ever upon the steps of the light treadeth the darkness; yea, springeth in fountains and wells amidst it, from the secret channels of its mighty sea. Truly, man is but a passing flame, moving unquietly amid the surrounding rest of night; without which he yet could not be, and whereof he is in part compounded."[2]

As I drew nearer, and she read on, she moved a little to turn a leaf of the dark old volume, and I saw that her face was sallow and slightly forbidding. Her forehead was high, and her black eyes repressedly quiet. But she took no notice of me. This end of the cottage, if cottage it could be called, was destitute of furniture, except the table with the lamp, and the chair on which the woman sat. In one corner was a door, apparently of a cupboard in the wall, but which might lead to a room beyond. Still the irresistible desire[3] which had made me enter the building, urged me: I must open that door, and see what was beyond it. I approached, and laid my hand on the rude latch. Then the woman spoke, but without lifting her head or looking at me: "You had better not open that door." This was uttered quite quietly; and she went on with her reading, partly in silence, partly aloud; but both modes seemed equally intended for herself alone. The prohibition, however, only increased my desire to see;[4] and as she took no further notice,

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[2] The woman temptress reads "from an ancient little volume," which is the antithesis to the Bible. Whereas Genesis 1 begins in darkness, God soon creates light, but this volume finds darkness overwhelming light—and prepares Anodos to receive his own darkness via his shadow. MacDonald begins his "unspoken sermon" "Light" with two quotations from John: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all"; "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (*Unspoken Sermons, Series Three*, 1889). This passage may have been influenced by Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), a spiritualist who also influenced William Blake. Swedenborg believed that the Last Judgment had happened in 1757 and that people were now living their last days.

[3] Rosemary Jackson in *Fantasy: A Literature of Desire* (Routledge, 1981) calls fantasy a "literature of desire" that attempts to uncover that which we deem inappropriate; thus, fantasy is also a "literature of subversion." Jackson's argument fits well with *Phantastes*, for Anodos's pathless quest finds him confronting that which he is repressing, seen concretely in this chapter.

[4] The desire for that which is prohibited is a central concept in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Imp of the Perverse" (1845). In this story Poe writes: "We stand upon the brink of a precipice. We peer into the abyss—we grow sick and dizzy. Our first impulse is to shrink away from the danger. Unaccountably we remain . . . it is but a thought, although a fearful one, and one which chills the very marrow of our bones with the fierceness of the delight of its horror." MacDonald was familiar with Poe, even

I gently opened the door to its full width, and looked in. At first, I saw nothing worthy of attention. It seemed a common closet, with shelves on each hand, on which stood various little necessaries for the humble uses of a cottage. In one corner stood one or two brooms, in another a hatchet and other common tools; showing that it was in use every hour of the day for household purposes. But, as I looked, I saw that there were no shelves at the back, and that an empty space went in further; its termination appearing to be a faintly glimmering wall or curtain, somewhat less, however, than the width and height of the doorway where I stood. But, as I continued looking, for a few seconds, towards this faintly-luminous limit, my eyes came into true relation with their object. All at once, with such a shiver as when one is suddenly conscious of the presence of another in a room where he has, for hours, considered himself alone, I saw that the seemingly luminous extremity was a sky, as of night, beheld through the long perspective of a narrow, dark passage, through what, or built of what, I could not tell. As I gazed, I clearly discerned two or three stars glimmering faintly in the distant blue. But, suddenly, and as if it had been running fast from a far distance for this very point, and had turned the corner without abating its swiftness, a dark figure sped into and along the passage from the blue opening at the remote end. I started back and shuddered, but kept looking, for I could not help it. On and on it came, with a speedy approach but delayed arrival; till, at last, through the many gradations of approach, it seemed to come within the sphere of myself, rushed up to me, and passed me into the cottage. All I could tell of its appearance was, that it seemed to be a dark human figure. Its motion was entirely noiseless, and might be called a gliding, were it not that it appeared that of a runner, but with ghostly feet. I had moved back yet a little to let him pass me, and looked round after him instantly. I could not see him.

"Where is he?" I said, in some alarm, to the woman, who still sat reading.

"There, on the floor, behind you," she said, pointing with her arm half-outstretched, but not lifting her eyes. I turned and looked, but saw nothing. Then with a feeling that there was yet something behind me, I looked round over my shoulder; and there, on the ground, lay a black shadow,[5] the size of a man. It was so dark, that I could see

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naming Mr. Raven from *Lilith* (1895) after Poe's most famous poem, "The Raven" (1845).

[5] The shadow is an important symbol in literature, helping to define the concept

it in the dim light of the lamp, which shone full upon it, apparently without thinning at all the intensity of its hue.

"I told you," said the woman, "you had better not look into that closet."

"What is it?" I said, with a growing sense of horror.

"It is only your shadow that has found you,"[6] she replied. "Everybody's shadow is ranging up and down looking for him. I believe you call it by a different name in your world: yours has found you, as every person's is almost certain to do who looks into that closet, especially after meeting one in the forest, whom I dare say you have met."

Here, for the first time, she lifted her head, and looked full at me: her mouth was full of long, white, shining teeth; and I knew that I was in the house of the ogre. I could not speak, but turned and left the house, with the shadow at my heels. "A nice sort of valet to have," I said to myself bitterly, as I stepped into the sunshine, and, looking over my shoulder, saw that it lay yet blacker in the full blaze of the sunlight. Indeed, only when I stood between it and the sun, was the blackness

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of the *doppelgänger*, or the double, made most famous by Robert Louis Stevenson in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). MacDonald certainly would have known Chamisso's *Peter Schlemihl's Wundersame Geschichte* (*Peter Schlemihl's Miraculous Story*, 1814), which concerns Peter being tricked by a man to sell his shadow. E. T. A. Hoffmann inserted Peter Schlemihl into his tale *A New Year's Adventure* (1815), and Nathaniel Hawthorne also refers to Peter in some of his stories, including "The Virtuoso's Collection" (1842) and "The Intelligence Office" (1844). Hans Christen Andersen's "The Shadow" (1847) (see Appendix C) would also be an influence on MacDonald (MacDonald published other Andersen fairy tales in *Good Words for the Young* when MacDonald was editor). Oscar Wilde in his fairy tale "The Fisherman and His Soul" (1891) also uses the concept of the shadow. And probably the most famous may come from Peter Pan: J. M. Barrie focuses on Peter losing his shadow in *Peter and Wendy* (1911) and the various editions of the play produced after the novelization. MacDonald's use of the shadow is original—Anodos is shadowless in Fairy Land, only to gain a shadow after violating a prohibition.

[6] The shadow is central in the psychological theories of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Carl Jung (1875-1961). Freud believed that the shadow was a projection of a repressed desire, while Jung used the shadow more systematically in this theory—to Jung, the shadow is the "dark side" of the human personality, the "moral problem" that leads the self on a quest for wholeness or "individuation." The shadow is an archetype in the collective unconsciousness. MacDonald's use of the shadow, in turn, has given rise to numerous critical interpretations that invoke Freud or Jung, two examples being Robert Lee Wolff's Freudian interpretation in *The Golden Key: A Study of the Fiction of George MacDonald* (Yale, 1961) and the recent Jungian analysis by Bonnie Gaarden in *The Christian Goddess: Archetype and Theology in the Fantasies of George MacDonald* (Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2011).

at all diminished. I was so bewildered—stunned—both by the event itself and its suddenness, that I could not at all realize to myself what it would be to have such a constant and strange attendance; but with a dim conviction that my present dislike would soon grow to loathing, I took my dreary way through the wood.

Chapter IX

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does nature live:
Ours is her wedding garments, ours her shroud!

Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth,
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud,
Enveloping the Earth—
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

COLERIDGE.[1]

From this time, until I arrived at the palace of Fairy Land, I can attempt no consecutive account of my wanderings and adventures. Everything, henceforward, existed for me in its relation to my attendant. What influence he exercised upon everything into contact with which I was brought, may be understood from a few detached instances. To begin with this very day on which he first joined me: after I had walked heartlessly along for two or three hours, I was very weary, and lay down to rest in a most delightful part of the forest, carpeted with wild-flowers. I lay for half an hour in a dull repose, and then got up to pursue my way. The flowers on the spot where I had lain were crushed to the earth; but I saw that they would soon lift their heads and rejoice again in the sun and air. Not so those on which my shadow had lain. The very outline of it could be traced in the withered lifeless grass, and the scorched and shrivelled flowers which stood there, dead, and hopeless of any resurrection. I shuddered, and hastened away with sad forebodings.

In a few days, I had reason to dread an extension of its baleful influences from the fact, that it was no longer confined to one position in regard to myself. Hitherto, when seized with an irresistible desire to look on my evil demon (which longing would unaccountably seize me at any moment, returning at longer or shorter intervals, sometimes every minute), I had to turn my head backwards, and look over my shoulder; in which position, as long as I could retain it, I was fascinated. But one day, having come out on a clear grassy hill, which commanded a glorious prospect, though of what I cannot now tell, my shadow moved round, and came in front of me. And, presently, a new manifestation increased my distress. For it began to coruscate,[2] and shoot out on all sides a radiation of dim shadow. These rays of gloom issued from the central shadow as from a black sun, lengthening and shortening with continual change. But wherever a ray struck, that part of earth, or sea, or sky, became void, and desert, and sad to my heart. On this, the first development of its new power, one ray shot out beyond the rest, seeming to lengthen infinitely, until it smote the great sun on the face, which withered and darkened beneath the blow. I turned away and went on. The shadow retreated to its former position; and when I looked again, it had drawn in all its spears of darkness, and followed like a dog at my heels.

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[1] From Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode" (lines 47-49 and 53-58). Coleridge published the poem in 1802. See Appendix C for the poem.

Once, as I passed by a cottage, there came out a lovely fairy child, with two wondrous toys, one in each hand. The one was the tube through which the fairy-gifted poet looks when he beholds the same thing everywhere; the other that through which he looks when he combines into new forms of loveliness those images of beauty which his own choice has gathered from all regions wherein he has travelled. Round the child's head was an aureole of emanating rays.[3] As I looked at him in wonder and delight, round crept from behind me the something dark, and the child stood in my shadow. Straightway he was a commonplace boy, with a rough broad-brimmed straw hat, through which brim the sun shone from behind. The toys he carried were a multiplying-glass and a kaleidoscope.[4] I sighed and departed.

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[2] Flashes or sparkles of light. In this case, the flashes are of the dark edges of the Shadow. Anodos nicely calls them "rays of gloom."

[3] In contrast with the Shadow, the child has flashes of light coming from the aureole, a sort of halo of light, surrounding the child's head.

[4] A multiplying glass is a glass lens with a number of facets that cause an object reflected in the glass to appear many times. A kaleidoscope is an optical instrument (often a tube) that gives a shifting pattern to the reflection of an object when the reflection is manipulated (one end of the tube may be turned to create the shifting pattern). Both of these objects allow for multiple reflections easily explained by the manipulation of light. In other words, the Shadow has removed the mystery of the child's toys. The Scotsman David Brewster (1781-1868) invented the kaleidoscope and received a patent for it in 1817. See Melanie Keene's *Science in Wonderland: The Scientific Fairy Tales of Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 2015) for an examination of how writers used fairy tales and fantastic narratives to explore and to explain scientific principles.

One evening, as a great silent flood of western gold flowed through an avenue in the woods, down the stream, just as when I saw him first, came the sad knight, riding on his chestnut steed. But his armour did not shine half so red as when I saw him first. Many a blow of mighty sword and axe, turned aside by the strength of his mail, and glancing adown the surface, had swept from its path the fretted rust, and the glorious steel had answered the kindly blow with the thanks of returning light. These streaks and spots made his armour look like the floor of a forest in the sunlight. His forehead was higher than before, for the contracting wrinkles were nearly gone; and the sadness that remained on his face was the sadness of a dewy summer twilight, not that of a frosty autumn morn. He, too, had met the Alder-maiden as I, but he had plunged into the torrent of mighty deeds, and the stain was nearly washed away. No shadow followed him. He had not entered the dark house; he had not had time to open the closet door. "Will he ever look in?" I said to myself. "*Must* his shadow find him some day?" But I could not answer my own questions.

We travelled together for two days, and I began to love him. It was plain that he suspected my story in some degree; and I saw him once or twice looking curiously and anxiously at my attendant gloom, which all this time had remained very obsequiously behind me; but I offered no explanation, and he asked none. Shame at my neglect of his warning, and a horror which shrunk from even alluding to its cause, kept me silent; till, on the evening of the second day, some noble words from my companion roused all my heart; and I was at the point of falling on his neck, and telling him the whole story; seeking, if not for helpful advice, for of that I was hopeless, yet for the comfort of sympathy—when round slid the shadow and inwrapt my friend; and I could not trust him. The glory of his brow vanished; the light of his eye grew cold; and I held my peace. The next morning we parted.

But the most dreadful thing of all was, that I now began to feel something like satisfaction in the presence of the shadow. I began to be rather vain of my attendant, saying to myself; "In a land like this, with so many illusions everywhere, I need his aid to disenchant the things around me. He does away with all appearances, and shows me things in their true colour and form. And I am not one to be fooled with the vanities of the common crowd. I will not see beauty where there is none. I will dare to behold things as they are. And if I live in a waste instead of a paradise, I will live knowing where I live." But of this a certain exercise of his power which soon followed quite cured me, turning my feelings towards him once more into loathing and distrust. It was thus:—

One bright noon, a little maiden joined me, coming through the wood in a direction at right angles to my path. She came along singing and dancing, happy as a child, though she seemed almost a woman. In her hands—now in one, now in another—she carried a small globe, bright and clear as the purest crystal. This seemed at once her plaything and her greatest treasure. At one moment, you would have thought her utterly careless of it, and at another, overwhelmed with anxiety for its safety. But I believe she was taking care of it all the time, perhaps not least when least occupied about it. She stopped by me with a smile, and bade me good day with the sweetest voice. I felt a wonderful liking to the child—for she produced on me more the impression of a child, though my understanding told me differently. We talked a little, and then walked on together in the direction I had been pursuing. I asked her about the globe she carried, but getting no definite answer, I held out my hand to take it. She drew back, and said, but smiling almost invitingly the while, "You must not touch it;"—then, after a moment's pause—"Or if you do, it must be very gently." I touched it with a finger. A slight vibratory motion arose in it, accompanied, or perhaps manifested, by a faint sweet sound. I touched it again, and the sound increased. I touched it the third time: a tiny torrent of harmony rolled out of the little globe. She would not let me touch it any more.

We travelled on together all that day. She left me when twilight came on; but next day, at noon, she met me as before, and again we travelled till evening. The third day she came once more at noon, and we walked on together. Now, though we had talked about a great many things connected with Fairy Land, and the life she had led hitherto, I had never been able to learn anything about the globe. This day, however, as we went on, the shadow glided round and inwrapt the maiden. It could not change her. But my desire to know about the globe, which in his gloom began to waver as with an inward light, and to shoot out flashes of many-coloured flame, grew irresistible. I put out both my hands and laid hold of it. It began to sound as before. The sound rapidly increased, till it grew a low tempest of harmony, and the globe trembled, and quivered, and throbbed between my hands. I had not the heart to pull it away from the maiden, though I held it in spite of her attempts to take it from me; yes, I shame to say, in spite of her prayers, and, at last, her tears. The music went on growing in intensity and complication of tones, and the globe vibrated and heaved; till at last it burst in our hands, and a black vapour broke upwards from out of it; then turned, as if blown sideways, and enveloped the maiden, hiding even the shadow in its blackness. She held fast the fragments, which I abandoned, and fled from me into the forest in the direction whence she had come, wailing like a child, and crying, "You have broken my globe; my globe is broken—my globe is broken!" I followed her, in the hope of comforting her; but had not pursued her far, before a sudden cold gust of wind bowed the tree-tops above us, and swept through their stems around us; a great cloud overspread the day, and a fierce tempest came on, in which I lost sight of her. It lies heavy on my heart to this hour.[5] At night, ere I fall asleep, often, whatever I may be thinking about, I suddenly hear her voice, crying out, "You have broken my globe; my globe is broken; ah, my globe!"

Here I will mention one more strange thing; but whether this peculiarity was owing to my shadow at all, I am not able to assure myself. I came to a village, the inhabitants of which could not at first sight be distinguished from the dwellers in our own land. They rather avoided than sought my company, though they were very pleasant when I addressed them. But at last I observed, that whenever I came within a certain distance of any one of them, which distance, however, varied with different individuals, the whole appearance of the person began to change; and this change increased in degree as I approached. When I receded to the former distance, the former appearance was restored. The nature of the change was grotesque, following no fixed rule. The nearest resemblance to it that I know, is the distortion produced in your countenance when you look at it as reflected in a concave or convex surface[6]—say, either side of a bright spoon. Of this phenomenon I first became aware in rather a ludicrous way. My host's daughter was a very pleasant pretty girl, who made herself more agreeable to me than most of those about me. For some days my companion-shadow had been less obtrusive than usual; and such was the reaction of spirits occasioned by the simple mitigation of torment, that, although I had cause enough besides to be gloomy, I felt light and comparatively happy. My impression is, that she was quite aware of the law of appearances that existed between the people of the place and myself, and had resolved to amuse herself at my expense; for one evening, after some jesting and raillery,[7] she, somehow or other, provoked me to attempt to kiss her. But she was well defended from any assault of the kind. Her countenance became, of a sudden, absurdly hideous; the pretty mouth was elongated and otherwise amplified sufficiently to have allowed of six simultaneous kisses. I started back in bewildered dismay; she burst into the merriest fit of laughter, and ran from the room. I soon found that the same undefinable law of change operated between me and all the other villagers; and that, to feel I was in pleasant company, it was absolutely necessary for me to discover and observe the right focal distance between myself and each one with whom I had to do. This done, all went pleasantly enough. Whether, when I happened to neglect this precaution, I presented to them an equally ridiculous appearance, I did not ascertain; but I presume that the alteration was common to the approximating parties. I was likewise unable to determine whether I was a necessary party to the production of this strange transformation, or whether it took place as well, under the given circumstances, between the inhabitants themselves.

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[5] The incident with the young girl and her globe is, perhaps, the most intensely symbolic incident in *Phantastes*. It is an excellent example of how Victorian writers dealt with delicate, even taboo, subjects. The globe serves as the girl's most precious possession, and Anodos, under the influence of his Shadow, breaks it. The action here is akin to a deflowering of the young girl, a rape. And the breaking of the globe is akin to the tearing of the hymen.

[6] Concave, or curving inwards, and convex, or curving outwards. What Anodos describes is similar to the comic effect of looking in a carnival mirror. The reflecting surface distorts that which is reflected.

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[7] Jesting is speaking in a humourous or joking manner and raillery is teasing or good-humoured ridicule. The two words are close to being pleonastic, the redundancy of words that mean the same thing.

Chapter X

From Eden's bowers the full-fed rivers flow,
To guide the outcasts to the land of woe:
Our Earth one little toiling streamlet yields,
To guide the wanderers to the happy fields.[1]

After leaving this village, where I had rested for nearly a week, I travelled through a desert region of dry sand and glittering rocks, peopled principally by goblin-fairies.[2] When I first entered their domains, and, indeed, whenever I fell in with another tribe of them, they began mocking me with offered handfuls of gold and jewels, making hideous grimaces at me, and performing the most antic homage, as if they thought I expected reverence, and meant to humour me like a maniac. But ever, as soon as one cast his eyes on the shadow behind me, he made a wry face, partly of pity, partly of contempt, and looked ashamed, as if he had been caught doing something inhuman; then, throwing down his handful of gold, and ceasing all his grimaces, he stood aside to let me pass in peace, and made signs to his companions to do the like. I had no inclination to observe them much, for the shadow was in my heart as well as at my heels. I walked listlessly and almost hopelessly along, till I arrived one day at a small spring; which, bursting cool from the heart of a sun-heated rock, flowed somewhat southwards from the direction I had been taking. I drank of this spring, and found myself wonderfully refreshed. A kind of love to the cheerful little stream arose in my heart. It was born in a desert; but it seemed to say to itself, "I will flow, and sing, and lave[3] my banks, till I make my desert a paradise." I thought I could not do better than follow it, and see what it made of it. So down with the stream I went, over rocky lands, burning with sunbeams. But the rivulet flowed not far, before a few blades of grass appeared on its banks, and then, here and there, a stunted bush. Sometimes it disappeared altogether under ground; and after I had wandered some distance, as near as I could guess, in the direction it seemed to take, I would suddenly hear it again, singing, sometimes far away to my right or left, amongst new rocks, over which it made new cataracts of watery melodies. The verdure on its banks increased as it flowed; other streams joined it; and at last, after many days' travel, I found myself, one gorgeous summer evening, resting by the side of a broad river, with a glorious horse-chestnut tree towering above me, and dropping its blossoms, milk-white and rosy-red all about me. As I sat, a gush of joy sprang forth in my heart, and overflowed at my eyes. Through my tears, the whole landscape glimmered in such bewildering loveliness, that I felt as if I were entering Fairy Land for the first time, and some loving hand were waiting to cool my head, and a loving word to warm my heart. Roses, wild roses, everywhere! So plentiful were they, they not only perfumed the air, they seemed to dye it a faint rose-hue. The colour floated abroad with the scent, and clomb, and spread, until the whole west blushed and glowed with the gathered incense of roses. And my heart fainted with longing in my bosom. Could I but see the Spirit of the Earth, as I saw once the indwelling woman of the beech-tree, and my beauty of the pale marble, I should be content. Content!—Oh, how gladly would I die of the light of her eyes! Yea, I would cease to be, if that would bring me one word of love from the one mouth.[4] The twilight sank around, and infolded me with sleep. I slept as I had not slept for months. I did not awake till late in the morning; when, refreshed in body and mind, I rose as from the death that wipes out the sadness of life, and then dies itself in the new morrow. Again I followed the stream; now climbing a steep rocky bank that hemmed it in; now wading through long grasses and wild flowers in its path; now through meadows; and anon through woods that crowded down to the very lip of the water.

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[1] These verses appear to be original ones from MacDonald, though he did not include them in his *Poetical Works, I and II.* Nick Page in *Phantastes: Special Annotated Edition* (Paternoster, 2008) helpfully points out the connection to Genesis, as well as the "happy fields" alluding to the Elysium Fields of classical mythology.

[2] Goblins are central to MacDonald's work. Goblins are mythical creatures from German and British folklore, though there is no clear consensus about the origin of these creatures, except that they are malevolent versions of fairies. MacDonald's most sustained fairy tales about goblins are *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872) and *The Princess and Curdie* (1883). Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" (written 1859, published 1862) may owe a debt to MacDonald. Charles Dickens inserted a tale "The Story of the Goblin Who Stole a Sexton" into *Pickwick Papers* (1836) and many critics have connected MacDonald with Dickens, and indications suggest that Dickens read—and liked—*Phantastes*, but there is no evidence of Dickens remarking on the fantasy novel. J. R. R. Tolkien, an admirer of MacDonald, clearly is influenced by MacDonald's goblins in his works about Middle Earth.

[3] In this context *lave* means to wash or bathe, or to wash against or to flow along

At length, in a nook of the river, gloomy with the weight of overhanging foliage, and still and deep as a soul in which the torrent eddies of pain have hollowed a great gulf, and then, subsiding in violence, have left it full of a motionless, fathomless sorrow—I saw a little boat lying. So still was the water

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with a past. The OED lists the word as one used only poetically. *Lave* also means that which is left over, and gives an example of this use to MacDonald's *Alec Forbes* (1865): "an' lea' the lave to me." It is clear that MacDonald has a fondness for this word.

[4] This longing for death amidst the beauty of nature recalls John Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" (1819), where the narrator says the he is "half in love with easeful Death" in response to the beauty of the bird's song. See Appendix C for the poem.

here, that the boat needed no fastening. It lay as if some one had just stepped ashore, and would in a moment return. But as there were no signs of presence, and no track through the thick bushes; and, moreover, as I was in Fairy Land, where one does very much as he pleases, I forced my way to the brink, stepped into the boat, pushed it, with the help of the tree-branches, out into the stream, lay down in the bottom, and let my boat and me float whither the stream would carry us.[5] I seemed to lose myself in the great flow of sky above me, unbroken in its infinitude, except when, now and then, coming nearer the shore at a bend in the river, a tree would sweep its mighty head silently above mine, and glide away back into the past, never more to fling its shadow over me. I fell asleep in this cradle, in which mother Nature was rocking her weary child; and while I slept, the sun slept not, but went round his arched way. When I awoke, he slept in the waters, and I went on my silent path beneath a round silvery moon. And a pale moon looked up from the floor of the great blue cave that lay in the abysmal silence beneath.

Why are all reflections lovelier than what we call the reality?—not so grand or so strong, it may be, but always lovelier? Fair as is the gliding sloop on the shining sea, the wavering, trembling, unresting sail below, is fairer still. Yea, the reflecting ocean itself reflected in the mirror, has a wondrousness about its waters that somewhat vanishes when I turn towards itself. All mirrors are magic mirrors.[6] The commonest room is a room in a poem when I turn to the glass. (And this reminds me, while I write, of a strange story which I read in the fairy palace, and of which I will try to make a feeble memorial in its place.) In whatever way it may be accounted for, of one thing we may be sure, that this feeling is no cheat; for there is no cheating in nature and the simple unsought feelings of the soul. There must be a truth involved in it, though we may but in part lay hold of the meaning. Even the memories of past pain are beautiful; and past delights, though beheld only through clefts in the grey clouds of sorrow, are lovely as Fairy Land. But how have I wandered into the deeper fairy-land of the soul, while as yet I only float towards the fairy palace of Fairy Land! The moon, which is the lovelier memory or reflex of the down-gone sun, the joyous day seen in the faint mirror of the brooding night, had rapt me away.

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[5] The boat scene recalls an experience Wordsworth writes about in *The Prelude* (begun in 1798, first published in 1850). In Book 1, the narrator recalls finding a boat on the shore and stealing it: "It was an act of stealth / And troubled pleasure." While floating, the narrator becomes terrified as he sees a mountain overpower his senses, his guilt for taking the boat without permission and tells the reader the importance of this "spot of time": "And, through the meadows homeward went, with grave / And serious thoughts; and after I had seen / That spectacle, for many days, my brain / Work'd with a dim and undetermein'd sense / Of unknown modes of being . . . ." One could argue that *Phantastes* finds Anodos experiencing one "unknown" mode of "being." See Appendix C for the full excerpt.

[6] Mirrors are important to *Phantastes*. Lewis Carroll plays with the mirror as portal to Looking-Glass Land in *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871), and MacDonald uses a mirror as a way for Mr. Vane to find his way to the fantastical world in *Lilith* (1895). This scene foreshadows the interpolated tale of Cosmo in chapter 13. A mirror provides a reflection, thus forcing the gazer into the mirror to reflect upon his or her self or identity. For a detailed examination of the mirror in *Phantastes*, see Fernando Soto's "Mirrors in MacDonald's *Phantastes*: A Reflexive Structure," *North Wind: A Journal of George MacDonald Studies*, vol. 23, 2004, pp 27-47.

I sat up in the boat. Gigantic forest trees were about me; through which, like a silver snake, twisted and twined the great river. The little waves, when I moved in the boat, heaved and fell with a plash as of molten silver, breaking the image of the moon into a thousand morsels, fusing again into one, as the ripples of laughter die into the still face of joy. The sleeping woods, in undefined massiveness; the water that flowed in its sleep; and, above all, the enchantress moon, which had cast them all, with her pale eye, into the charmed slumber, sank into my soul, and I felt as if I had died in a dream, and should never more awake.

From this I was partly aroused by a glimmering of white that, through the trees on the left, vaguely crossed my vision, as I gazed upwards. But the trees again hid the object; and at the moment, some strange melodious bird took up its song, and sang, not an ordinary bird-song, with constant repetitions of the same melody, but what sounded like a continuous strain, in which one thought was expressed, deepening in intensity as evolved in progress. It sounded like a welcome already overshadowed with the coming farewell. As in all sweetest music, a tinge of sadness was in every note. Nor do we know how much of the pleasures even of life we owe to the intermingled sorrows. Joy cannot unfold the deepest truths, although deepest truth must be deepest joy. Cometh white-robed Sorrow, stooping and wan, and flingeth wide the doors she may not enter. Almost we linger with Sorrow for very love.[7]

As the song concluded, the stream bore my little boat with a gentle sweep round a bend of the river; and lo! on a broad lawn, which rose from the water's edge with a long green slope to a clear elevation from which the trees receded on all sides, stood a stately palace glimmering ghostly in the moonshine: it seemed to be built throughout of the whitest marble. There was no reflection of moonlight from windows—there seemed to be none; so there was no cold glitter; only, as I said, a ghostly shimmer. Numberless shadows tempered the shine, from column and balcony and tower. For everywhere galleries ran along the face of the buildings; wings were extended in many directions; and numberless openings, through which the moonbeams vanished into the interior, and which served both for doors and windows, had their separate balconies in front, communicating with a common gallery that rose on its own pillars. Of course, I did not discover all this from the river, and in the moonlight. But, though I was there for many days, I did not succeed in mastering the inner topography[8] of the building, so extensive and complicated was it.

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[7] MacDonald once again captures the essence of the sublime that co-mingles pleasure with pain. See note 11, chapter 7 for an overview of *Sehnsucht*, the longing after the unattainable, or the longing for death.

Here I wished to land, but the boat had no oars on board. However, I found that a plank, serving for a seat, was unfastened, and with that I brought the boat to the bank, and scrambled on shore. Deep soft turf sank beneath my feet, as I went up the ascent towards the palace. When I reached it, I saw that it stood on a great platform of marble, with an ascent, by broad stairs of the same, all round it. Arrived on the platform, I found there was an extensive outlook over the forest, which, however, was rather veiled than revealed by the moonlight. Entering by a wide gateway, but without gates, into an inner court, surrounded on all sides by great marble pillars supporting galleries above, I saw a large fountain of porphyry[9] in the middle, throwing up a lofty column of water, which fell, with a noise as of the fusion of all sweet sounds, into a basin beneath; overflowing which, it ran in a single channel towards the interior of the building. Although the moon was by this time so low in the west, that not a ray of her light fell into the court, over the height of the surrounding buildings; yet was the court lighted by a second reflex from the sun of other lands. For the top of the column of water, just as it spread to fall, caught the moonbeams; and like a great pale lamp, hung high in the night air, threw a dim memory of light (as it were) over the court below. This court was paved in diamonds of white and red marble. According to my custom since I entered Fairy Land, of taking for a guide whatever I first found moving in any direction, I followed the stream from the basin of the fountain. It led me to a great open door, beneath the ascending steps of which it ran through a low arch, and disappeared. Entering here, I found myself in a great hall, surrounded with white pillars, and paved with black and white. This I could see by the moonlight, which, from the other side, streamed through open windows into the hall. Its height I could not distinctly see. As soon as I entered, I had the feeling so common to me in the woods, that there were others there besides myself, though I could see no one, and heard no sound to indicate a presence. Since my visit to the Church of Darkness,[10] my power of seeing the fairies of the higher orders had gradually diminished, until it had almost ceased. But I could frequently believe in their presence while unable to see them. Still, although I had company, and doubtless of a safe kind, it seemed rather dreary to spend the night in an empty marble hall, however beautiful, especially as the moon was near the going down, and it would soon be dark. So I began at the place where I entered, and walked round the hall, looking for some door or passage that might lead me to a more hospitable chamber. As I walked, I was deliciously haunted with the feeling that behind some one of the seemingly innumerable pillars, one who loved me was waiting for me. Then I thought she was following me from pillar to pillar as I went along; but no arms came out of the faint moonlight, and no sigh assured me of her presence.

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[8] The science or practice of describing a place or location; a map of natural and artificial features. *Phantastes* becomes a topography or map of Fairy Land, a map of the fantastical realm that reflects the workings of Anodos's mind.

[9] A reddish or purple rock, polished when used for jewelry.

At length I came to an open corridor, into which I turned; notwithstanding that, in doing so, I left the light behind. Along this I walked with outstretched hands, groping my way; till, arriving at another corridor, which seemed to strike off at right angles to that in which I was, I saw at the end a faintly glimmering light, too pale even for moonshine, resembling rather a stray phosphorescence.[11] However, where everything was white, a little light went a great way. So I walked on to the end, and a long corridor it was. When I came up to the light, I found that it proceeded from what looked like silver letters upon a door of ebony; and, to my surprise even in the home of wonder itself, the letters formed the words, *The Chambers of Sir*

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[10] Anodos now names the place where he received his shadow, the house of the ogress. The Church of Darkness evokes an anti-church of God and foreshadows the final battle that Anodos undertakes with a huge wolfish creature.

[11] Emission of light without any heat. MacDonald has described this emission throughout the novel, particularly when describing the fairies he first encounters.

Anodos. Although I had as yet no right to the honours of a knight, I ventured to conclude that the chamber was indeed intended for me; and, opening the door without hesitation, I entered. Any doubt as to whether I was right in so doing, was soon dispelled. What to my dark eyes seemed a blaze of light, burst upon me. A fire of large pieces of some sweet-scented wood, supported by dogs of silver,[12] was burning on the hearth, and a bright lamp stood on a table, in the midst of a plentiful meal, apparently awaiting my arrival. But what surprised me more than all, was, that the room was in every respect a copy of my own room, the room whence the little stream from my basin had led me into Fairy Land. There was the very carpet of grass and moss and daisies, which I had myself designed; the curtains of pale blue silk, that fell like a cataract over the windows; the old-fashioned bed, with the chintz furniture, on which I had slept from boyhood. "Now I shall sleep," I said to myself. "My shadow dares not come here."

I sat down to the table, and began to help myself to the good things before me with confidence. And now I found, as in many instances before, how true the fairy tales are; for I was waited on, all the time of my meal, by invisible hands.[13] I had scarcely to do more than look towards anything I wanted, when it was brought me, just as if it had come to me of itself. My glass was kept filled with the wine I had chosen, until I looked towards another bottle or decanter; when a fresh glass was substituted, and the other wine supplied. When I had eaten and drunk more heartily and joyfully than ever since I entered Fairy Land, the whole was removed by several attendants, of whom some were male and some female, as I thought I could distinguish from the way the dishes were lifted from the table, and the motion with which they were carried out of the room. As soon as they were all taken away, I heard a sound as of the shutting of a door; and knew that I was left alone. I sat long by the fire, meditating, and wondering how it would all end; and when at length, wearied with thinking, I betook myself to my own old bed, it was half with a hope that, when I awoke in the morning, I should awake not only in my own room, but in my own castle also; and that I should walk out upon my own native soil; and find that Fairy Land was, after all, only a vision of the night. The sound of the falling waters of the fountain floated me into oblivion.

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[12] Ornamental fire irons to hold wood for burning in a fireplace. Often these fire irons were adorned with figures, including fantastical creatures and, of course, dogs.

[13] Anodos describes a typical trope in fairy tales: the invisible hands of helpers that care for the traveler. "Beauty and the Beast," in its various transformations, is just one example.

Chapter XI

A wilderness of building, sinking far
And self-withdrawn into a wondrous depth,
Far sinking into splendour—without end!
Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,
With alabaster domes, and silver spires,
And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
Uplifted.

WORDSWORTH.[1]

But when, after a sleep, which, although dreamless, yet left behind it a sense of past blessedness, I awoke in the full morning, I found, indeed, that the room was still my own; but that it looked abroad upon an unknown landscape of forest and hill and dale on the one side—and on the other, upon the marble court, with the great fountain, the crest of which now flashed glorious in the sun, and cast on the pavement beneath, a shower of faint shadows from the waters that fell from it into the marble basin below.

Agreeably to all authentic accounts of the treatment of travellers in Fairy Land, I found by my bedside a complete suit of fresh clothing, just such as I was in the habit of wearing; for, though varied sufficiently from the one removed, it was yet in complete accordance with my tastes. I dressed myself in this, and went out. The whole palace shone like silver in the sun. The marble was partly dull and partly polished; and every pinnacle, dome, and turret ended in a ball, or cone, or cusp of silver. It was like frost-work, and too dazzling, in the sun, for earthly eyes like mine. I will not attempt to describe the environs, save by saying, that all the pleasures to be found in the most varied and artistic arrangement of wood and river, lawn and wild forest, garden and shrubbery, rocky hill and luxurious vale; in living creatures wild and tame, in gorgeous birds, scattered fountains, little streams, and reedy lakes—all were here. Some parts of the palace itself I shall have occasion to describe more minutely.[2]

For this whole morning, I never thought of my demon shadow; and not till the weariness which supervened on delight brought it again to my memory, did I look round to see if it was behind me: it was scarcely discernible. But its presence, however faintly revealed, sent a pang to my heart, for the pain of which, not all the beauties around me could compensate. It was followed, however, by the comforting reflection that, peradventure,[3] I might here find the magic word of power to banish the demon and set me free, so that I should no longer be a man beside myself. The Queen of Fairy Land, thought I, must dwell here: surely she will put forth her power to deliver me, and send me singing through the further gates of her country back to my own land. "Shadow of me!" I said; "which art not me, but which representest thyself to me as me; here I may find a shadow of light which will devour thee, the shadow of darkness! Here I may find a blessing which will fall on thee as a curse, and damn thee to the blackness whence thou hast emerged unbidden."[4] I said this, stretched at length on the slope of the lawn above the river; and as the hope arose within me, the sun came forth from a light fleecy cloud that swept across his face; and hill and dale, and the great river winding on through the still mysterious forest, flashed back his rays as with a silent shout of joy; all nature lived and glowed; the very earth grew warm beneath me; a magnificent dragon-fly went past me like an arrow from a bow, and a whole concert of birds burst into choral song.

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[1] Lines 836- 842 from Book II of William Wordsworth's *The Excursion* (1814).

[2] Anodos finds himself in a "stately pleasure dome" from Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" (written in 1797; published in 1816).

The heat of the sun soon became too intense even for passive support. I therefore rose, and sought the shelter of one of the arcades.[5] Wandering along from one to another of these, wherever my heedless steps led me, and wondering everywhere at the simple magnificence of the building, I arrived at another hall, the roof of which was of a pale blue, spangled with constellations of silver stars,[6] and supported by porphyry[7] pillars of a paler red than ordinary.—In this house (I may remark in passing), silver[8] seemed everywhere preferred to gold;

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[3] Possibly from the French "par aventure." The word strikes an archaic chord in keeping with the medieval trappings of Anodos's adventure.

[4] Without having been invited or called upon. Anodos here seeks to exonerate himself from any responsibility for having created the Shadow.

[5] An arcade is a passageway or gallery with an arched roof. The architectural design of the palace is gothic, in keeping with the medieval aspects of the story.

[6] Later, when MacDonald lived in Hammersmith in a house named The Retreat (later Kelmscott House owned by William Morris), he had the ceiling of his study painted with the night stars. MacDonald lived in The Retreat from 1867 to 1877.

[7] A reddish or purple rock; polished when used for jewelry.

[8] MacDonald typically associates silver with imagination and femininity, whereas he associates gold with reason and masculinity. In MacDonald's code, the moon is silver and feminine, the sun gold and masculine.

and such was the purity of the air, that it showed nowhere signs of tarnishing.—The whole of the floor of this hall, except a narrow path behind the pillars, paved with black, was hollowed into a huge basin, many feet deep, and filled with the purest, most liquid and radiant water. The sides of the basin were white marble, and the bottom was paved with all kinds of refulgent[9] stones, of every shape and hue. In their arrangement, you would have supposed, at first sight, that there was no design, for they seemed to lie as if cast there from careless and playful hands; but it was a most harmonious confusion;[10] and as I looked at the play of their colours, especially when the waters were in motion, I came at last to feel as if not one little pebble could be displaced, without injuring the effect of the whole. Beneath this floor of the water, lay the reflection of the blue inverted roof, fretted with its silver stars, like a second deeper sea, clasping and upholding the first. This fairy bath was probably fed from the fountain in the court. Led by an irresistible desire, I undressed, and plunged into the water. It clothed me as with a new sense and its object both in one. The waters lay so close to me, they seemed to enter and revive my heart. I rose to the surface, shook the water from my hair, and swam as in a rainbow, amid the coruscations[11] of the gems below seen through the agitation caused by my motion. Then, with open eyes, I dived, and swam beneath the surface. And here was a new wonder. For the basin, thus beheld, appeared to extend on all sides like a sea, with here and there groups as of ocean rocks, hollowed by ceaseless billows into wondrous caves and grotesque pinnacles. Around the caves grew sea-weeds of all hues, and the corals glowed between; while far off, I saw the glimmer of what seemed to be creatures of human form at home in the waters. I thought I had been enchanted; and that when I rose to the surface, I should find myself miles from land, swimming alone upon a heaving sea;[12] but when my eyes emerged from the waters, I saw above me the blue spangled vault, and the red pillars around. I dived again, and found myself once more in the heart of a great sea. I then arose, and swam to the edge, where I got out easily, for the water reached the very brim, and, as I drew near washed in tiny waves over the black marble border. I dressed, and went out, deeply refreshed.

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[9] Radiant, shining brightly.

[10] "Harmonious confusion" is another example of oxymoron. This apparent contradiction in terms serves to indicate MacDonald's sense of form, his notion of the fairy tale itself. See his epigraph from Novalis that opens *Phantastes*. The fairy tale may seem haphazard or confusing, but upon reflection one can see how the confusion coalesces into something meaningful, dare we say even symmetrical. This type of story serves up a "fearful symmetry" so famously described by Blake in "The Tyger" from *Songs of Experience* (1794).

[11] Flashes or sparkles of light, as demonstrated in note 7, chapter11.

[12] A heaving sea is one in which the waves run high. Rough waters.

And now I began to discern faint, gracious forms, here and there throughout the building. Some walked together in earnest conversation. Others strayed alone. Some stood in groups, as if looking at and talking about a picture or a statue. None of them heeded me. Nor were they plainly visible to my eyes. Sometimes a group, or single individual, would fade entirely out of the realm of my vision as I gazed. When evening came, and the moon arose, clear as the round of a horizon-sea when the sun hangs over it in the west, I began to see them all more plainly; especially when they came between me and the moon; and yet more especially, when I myself was in the shade. But, even then, I sometimes saw only the passing wave of a white robe; or a lovely arm or neck gleamed by in the moonshine; or white feet went walking alone over the moony sward.[13] Nor, I grieve to say, did I ever come much nearer to these glorious beings, or ever look upon the Queen of the Fairies herself. My destiny ordered otherwise.

In this palace of marble and silver, and fountains and moonshine, I spent many days; waited upon constantly in my own room with everything desirable, and bathing daily in the fairy bath. All this time I was little troubled with my demon shadow. I had a vague feeling that he was somewhere about the palace; but it seemed as if the hope that I should in this place be finally freed from his hated presence, had sufficed to banish him for a time. How and where I found him, I shall soon have to relate.

The third day after my arrival, I found the library of the palace; and here, all the time I remained, I spent most of the middle of the day. For it was, not to mention far greater attractions, a luxurious retreat from the noontide sun. During the mornings and afternoons, I wandered about the lovely neighbourhood, or lay, lost in delicious day-dreams, beneath some mighty tree on the open lawn. My evenings were by and by spent in a part of the palace, the account of which, and of my adventures in connection with it, I must yet postpone for a little.

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[13] Lawn or short grassy surface.

The library was a mighty hall,[14] lighted from the roof, which was formed of something like glass, vaulted over in a single piece, and stained throughout with a great mysterious picture in gorgeous colouring. The walls were lined from floor to roof with books and books; most of them in ancient bindings, but some in strange new fashions which I had never seen, and which, were I to make the attempt, I could ill describe. All around the walls, in front of the books, ran galleries in rows, communicating by stairs. These galleries were built of all kinds of coloured stones; all sorts of marble and granite, with porphyry, jasper, lapis lazuli, agate,[15] and various others, were ranged in wonderful melody of successive colours. Although the material, then, of which these galleries and stairs were built, rendered necessary a certain degree of massiveness in the construction, yet such was the size of the place, that they seemed to run along the walls like cords. Over some parts of the library, descended curtains of silk of various dyes, none of which I ever saw lifted while I was there; and I felt somehow that it would be presumptuous in me to venture to look within them. But the use of the other books seemed free; and day after day I came to the library, threw myself on one of the many sumptuous eastern carpets,[16] which lay here and there on the floor, and read, and read, until weary; if that can be designated as weariness, which was rather the faintness of rapturous delight; or until, sometimes, the failing of the light invited me to go abroad, in the hope that a cool gentle breeze might have arisen to bathe, with an airy invigorating bath, the limbs which the glow of the burning spirit within had withered no less than the glow of the blazing sun without.

One peculiarity of these books, or at least most of those I looked into, I must make a somewhat vain attempt to describe.[17]

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[14] Libraries are a recurring feature in MacDonald's fiction, featured prominently in *Lilith* (1895), his other fantasy directed at adult readers. Libraries represent history and knowledge and repose and even mystery. The fairy library here is massive, a great vaulted hall, something like, perhaps, the Radcliffe Camera Library in Oxford, or the Reading Room in the British Museum in London.

[15] Jasper, lapis lazuli, agate are all colourful gemstones. Jasper is a variety of chalcedony (quartz) that is opaque. It is more familiarly brown, yellow, or reddish, but it may be other opaque colours. Lapis lazuli is intensely blue. Agate is a translucent type of chalcedony, brightly coloured; agate stone contains a range of colours.

[16] "Sumptuous eastern carpets" probably refers to Oriental carpets or carpets made in eastern countries, or to Persian carpets, carpets made in middle-eastern countries. Such carpets are sturdy and lavishly designed. "Sumptuous" means luxurious. These carpets relate to stories in the *Arabian Nights* tales and invoke an exoticism.

[17] A recurring theme in *Phantastes*, and throughout MacDonald's work, is the "sad

If, for instance, it was a book of metaphysics[18] I opened, I had scarcely read two pages before I seemed to myself to be pondering over discovered truth, and constructing the intellectual machine whereby to communicate the discovery to my fellow men. With some books, however, of this nature, it seemed rather as if the process was removed yet a great way further back; and I was trying to find the root of a manifestation, the spiritual truth whence a material vision sprang; or to combine two propositions, both apparently true, either at once or in different remembered moods, and to find the point in which their invisibly converging lines would unite in one, revealing a truth higher than either and differing from both; though so far from being opposed to either, that it was that whence each derived its life and power. Or if the book was one of travels, I found myself the traveller. New lands, fresh experiences, novel customs, rose around me.[19] I walked, I discovered, I fought, I suffered, I rejoiced in my success. Was it a history? I was the chief actor therein. I suffered my own blame; I was glad in my own praise. With a fiction it was the same. Mine was the whole story. For I took the place of the character who was most like myself, and his story was mine; until, grown weary with the life of years condensed in an hour, or arrived at my death-bed, or the end of the volume, I would awake, with a sudden bewilderment, to the consciousness of my present life, recognising the walls and roof around me, and finding I joyed or sorrowed only in a book. If the book was a poem, the words disappeared, or took the subordinate position of an accompaniment to the succession of forms and images that rose and vanished with a soundless rhythm, and a hidden rhyme.[20]

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incompetence of human speech" (Wordsworth, 1850 *The Prelude*, Bk 6, line 593). Words can only approximate what one means or sees or attempts to communicate.

[18] Branch of philosophy that deals with the fundamentals of reality: being, knowing, time, and space. Metaphysics in MacDonald's day referred to "first things," the causes of our being. For a full discussion of metaphysics, see, for example, the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.*

[19] Anodos describes a reading experience in which he lives that which he encounters in his reading. He not merely observes, but rather experiences what the writer experiences. In this way he comes in contact with things previously unknown to him such as cultural customs in foreign lands.

[20] Again, Anodos attempts to communicate what we might call the Edenic power of language, the power of language to sweep one away from the here and now and deliver an experience that goes beyond language and communicates directly, without mediation. "Soundless rhythm" and "hidden rhyme," both oxymorons, are an attempt to communicate this aspect of language.

In one, with a mystical title, which I cannot recall, I read of a world that is not like ours. The wondrous account, in such a feeble, fragmentary way as is possible to me, I would willingly impart. Whether or not it was all a poem, I cannot tell; but, from the impulse I felt, when I first contemplated writing it, to break into rhyme, to which impulse I shall give way if it comes upon me again, I think it must have been, partly at least, in verse.

Chapter XII

Chained is the Spring. The night-wind bold
  Blows over the hard earth;
Time is not more confused and cold,
  Nor keeps more wintry mirth.

Yet blow, and roll the world about;
  Blow, Time—blow, winter's Wind!
Through chinks of Time, heaven peepeth out,
  And Spring the frost behind.

G. E. M.[1]

They who believe in the influences of the stars over the fates of men, are, in feeling at least, nearer the truth than they who regard the heavenly bodies as related to them merely by a common obedience to an external law. All that man sees has to do with man. Worlds cannot be without an intermundane relationship. The community of the centre of all creation suggests an interradiating connexion[2] and dependence of the parts. Else a grander idea is conceivable than that which is already imbodied. The blank, which is only a forgotten life, lying behind the consciousness, and the misty splendour, which is an undeveloped life, lying before it, may be full of mysterious revelations of other connexions with the worlds around us, than those of science and poetry.[3] No shining belt or gleaming moon, no red and green glory in a self-encircling twin-star, but has a relation with the hidden things of a man's soul, and, it may be, with the secret history of his body as well. They are portions of the living house wherein he abides.

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[1] This poem appears in MacDonald's *A Threefold Cord* (1883), where MacDonald is credited as contributor and editor. In this volume, individual authors are not credited. While some have thought that this passage is by MacDonald himself, Nick Page persuasively argues that the poem should be attributed to MacDonald's friend Greville Ewing Matheson. See Page, *Phantastes: Special Annotated Edition* (Paternoster, 2008).

[2] The Victorians believed in connections (connexions) that suggested an order to the world. The idea of connections became even more important after the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) that argued that evolution was random. In *Bleak House* (1853) Dickens shows the centrality of connections: "What connexion can there be, between the place in Lincolnshire, the house in town, the Mercury in powder, and the whereabout of Jo the outlaw with the broom, who had that distant ray of light upon him when he swept the churchyard-step? What connexion can there have been between many people in the innumerable histories of this world, who, from opposite sides of great gulfs, have, nevertheless, been very curiously brought together!"

[3] The supposed tension between science and poetry concerned the Victorians, especially with Darwin's theory of evolution creating debate; in addition, various

Through the realms of the monarch Sun
Creeps a world, whose course had begun,
On a weary path with a weary pace,
Before the Earth sprang forth on her race:
But many a time the Earth had sped
Around the path she still must tread,
Ere the elder planet, on leaden wing,
Once circled the court of the planet's king.

There, in that lonely and distant star,
The seasons are not as our seasons are;
But many a year hath Autumn to dress
The trees in their matron loveliness;
As long hath old Winter in triumph to go
O'er beauties dead in his vaults below;
And many a year the Spring doth wear
Combing the icicles from her hair;
And Summer, dear Summer, hath years of June,
With large white clouds, and cool showers at noon;
And a beauty that grows to a weight like grief,
Till a burst of tears is the heart's relief.

Children, born when Winter is king,
May never rejoice in the hoping Spring;
Though their own heart-buds are bursting with joy,
And the child hath grown to the girl or boy;
But may die with cold and icy hours
Watching them ever in place of flowers.
And some who awake from their primal sleep,
When the sighs of Summer through forests creep,

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studies of the geological record found the earth's crust much older than expected—and older than the biblical account. MacDonald attempted to bring science and poetry (the imagination) together, primarily by arguing that God created the world to be discovered by humans. In "Imagination: Its Function and Culture" (1867) he writes: "To inquire into what God has made is the main function of the imagination. It is aroused by facts, is nourished by facts, seeks for higher and yet higher laws in these facts; but refuses to regard science as the sole interpreter of nature, or the laws of science as the only region of discovery." MacDonald's following history of the fairies uses the imagination to create a new—yet real—region of discovery of Fairly Land. See Appendix D for an excerpt from this essay.

Live, and love, and are loved again;
Seek for pleasure, and find its pain;
Sink to their last, their forsaken sleeping,
With the same sweet odours around them creeping.

Now the children, there, are not born as the children are born in worlds nearer to the sun. For they arrive no one knows how. A maiden, walking alone, hears a cry: for even there a cry is the first utterance; and searching about, she findeth, under an overhanging rock, or within a clump of bushes, or, it may be, betwixt grey stones on the side of a hill, or in any other sheltered and unexpected spot, a little child. This she taketh tenderly, and beareth home with joy, calling out, "Mother, mother"—if so be that her mother lives—"I have got a baby—I have found a child!"[4] All the household gathers round to see;—"*Where is it? What is it like? Where did you find it?*" and such-like questions, abounding. And thereupon she relates the whole story of the discovery; for by the circumstances, such as season of the year, time of the day, condition of the air, and such like, and, especially, the peculiar and never-repeated aspect of the heavens and earth at the time, and the nature of the place of shelter wherein it is found, is determined, or at least indicated, the nature of the child thus discovered. Therefore, at certain seasons, and in certain states of the weather, according, in part, to their own fancy, the young women go out to look for children. They generally avoid seeking them, though they cannot help sometimes finding them, in places and with circumstances uncongenial to their peculiar likings. But no sooner is a child found, than its claim for protection and nurture obliterates all feeling of choice in the matter. Chiefly, however, in the season of summer, which lasts so long, coming as it does after such long intervals; and mostly in the warm evenings, about the middle of twilight; and principally in the woods and along the river banks, do the maidens go looking for children, just as children look for flowers. And ever as the child grows, yea, more and more as he advances in years, will his face indicate to those who understand the spirit of Nature, and her utterances in the face of the world, the nature of the place of his birth, and the other circumstances thereof; whether a clear morning sun guided his mother to the nook whence issued the boy's low cry; or at eve the lonely maiden (for the same woman never finds a second, at least while the first lives) discovers the girl by the glimmer of her white skin, lying in a nest like that of the lark, amid long encircling grasses, and the upward-gazing eyes of the lowly daisies; whether the storm bowed the forest trees around, or the still frost fixed in silence the else flowing and babbling stream.

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[4] The foundling, or found child, is a key trope in various myths. MacDonald uses the foundling myth is his other more realistic novels; *The Vicar's Daughter* (1872) is just one example. The changeling, where fairies steal a human baby and replace with a fairy, also resonates here.

After they grow up, the men and women are but little together. There is this peculiar difference between them, which likewise distinguishes the women from those of the earth. The men alone have arms; the women have only wings.[5] Resplendent wings are they, wherein they can shroud themselves from head to foot in a panoply of glistering glory. By these wings alone, it may frequently be judged in what seasons, and under what aspects they were born. From those that came in winter, go great white wings, white as snow; the edge of every feather shining like the sheen of silver, so that they flash and glitter like frost in the sun. But underneath, they are tinged with a faint pink or rose-colour. Those born in spring have wings of a brilliant green, green as grass; and towards the edges the feathers are enamelled like the surface of the grass-blades. These again are white within. Those that are born in summer have wings of a deep rose-colour, lined with pale gold. And those born in autumn have purple wings, with a rich brown on the inside. But these colours are modified and altered in all varieties, corresponding to the mood of the day and hour, as well as the season of the year; and sometimes I found the various colours so intermingled, that I could not determine even the season, though doubtless the hieroglyphic could be deciphered by more experienced eyes. One splendour, in particular, I remember—wings of deep carmine,[6] with an inner down of warm gray, around a form of brilliant whiteness. She had been found as the sun went down through a low sea-fog, casting crimson along a broad sea-path into a little cave on the shore, where a bathing maiden saw her lying.

But though I speak of sun and fog, and sea and shore, the world there is in some respects very different from the earth whereon men live. For instance, the waters reflect no forms. To the unaccustomed eye they appear, if undisturbed, like the surface of a dark metal, only that the latter would reflect indistinctly, whereas they reflect not at all, except light which falls immediately upon them. This has a great effect in causing the landscapes to differ from those on the earth. On the stillest evening, no tall ship on the sea sends a long wavering reflection almost to the feet of him on shore; the face of no maiden brightens at its own beauty in a still forest-well. The sun and moon alone make a glitter on the surface. The sea is like a sea of death, ready to ingulf and never to reveal: a visible shadow of oblivion. Yet the women sport in its waters like gorgeous sea-birds. The men more rarely enter them. But, on the contrary, the sky reflects everything beneath it, as if it were built of water like ours. Of course, from its concavity there is some distortion of the reflected objects;[7] yet wondrous combinations of form are often to be seen in the overhanging depth. And then it is not shaped so much like a round dome as the sky of the earth, but, more of an egg-shape, rises to a great towering height in the middle, appearing far more lofty than the other. When the stars come out at night, it shows a mighty cupola,[8] "fretted with golden fires," wherein there is room for all tempests to rush and rave.

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[5] To give women wings connects to the Victorian notion of the "angel in the house" made (in)famous by Coventry Patmore in his poem *The Angel in the House* (1854 and expanded 1862). MacDonald's friend, John Ruskin, the eminent art and social critic of the nineteenth century, reinforces Patmore's view of women in the lecture "Of Queen's Gardens" (1865).

[6] Red or crimson color.

One evening in early summer, I stood with a group of men and women on a steep rock that overhung the sea. They were all questioning me about my world and the ways thereof. In making reply to one of their questions, I was compelled to say that children are not born in the Earth as with them. Upon this I was assailed with a whole battery of inquiries, which at first I tried to avoid; but, at last, I was compelled, in the vaguest manner I could invent, to make some approach to the subject in question. Immediately a dim notion of what I meant, seemed to dawn in the minds of most of the women. Some of them folded their great wings all around them, as they generally do when in the least offended, and stood erect and motionless. One spread out her rosy pinions, and flashed from the promontory into the gulf at its foot. A great light shone in the eyes of one maiden, who turned and walked slowly away, with her purple and white wings half dispread behind her. She was found, the next morning, dead beneath a withered tree on a bare hill-side, some miles inland. They buried her where she lay, as is their custom; for, before they die, they instinctively search for a spot like the place of their birth, and having found one that satisfies them, they lie down, fold their wings around them, if they be women, or cross their arms over their breasts, if they are men, just as if they were going to sleep; and so sleep indeed. The sign or cause of coming death is an indescribable longing for something, they know not what, which seizes them, and drives them into solitude, consuming them within, till the body fails. When a youth and a maiden look too deep into each other's eyes, this longing seizes and possesses them; but instead of drawing nearer to each other, they wander away, each alone, into solitary places, and die of their desire.[9] But it seems to me, that thereafter they are born babes upon our earth: where, if, when grown, they find each other, it goes well with them; if not, it will seem to go ill. But of this I know nothing. When I told them that the women on the Earth had not wings like them, but arms, they stared, and said how bold and masculine they must look; not knowing that their wings, glorious as they are, are but undeveloped arms.

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[7] MacDonald's Fairy Land is based on distortion so he can convince the reader of this fantastical world. Concavity is the condition of a surface that bends inward, while convexity is the curving out of a surface. MacDonald argues that all mirrors are magic mirrors, and carnival shows often have mirrors that are concave and convex, distorting the image of the viewer. MacDonald describes Fairy Land as a kind of carnival, as noted earlier.

[8] Rounded dome or vault, usually referring to a roof on a building or burial tomb.

But see the power of this book, that, while recounting what I can recall of its contents, I write as if myself had visited the far-off planet,[10] learned its ways and appearances, and conversed with its men and women. And so, while writing, it seemed to me that I had.

The book goes on with the story of a maiden, who, born at the close of autumn, and living in a long, to her endless winter, set out at last to find the regions of spring; for, as in our earth, the seasons are divided over the globe. It begins something like this:

> She watched them dying for many a day,
> Dropping from off the old trees away,
> One by one; or else in a shower
> Crowding over the withered flower
> For as if they had done some grievous wrong,

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[9] This is a complex passage that finds MacDonald, in a veiled way, providing an overview of sexual education. The woman from the other world, who walks away and dies of desire, connects to the notion of *Sensucht*, the longing after the unattainable, *and* also suggests a desire for sexual intimacy. That when a woman or man dies in this land she or he is born as a baby on earth reinforces MacDonald's introduction to sex education.

[10] MacDonald hints at a setting ripe for science fiction, the two most prominent Victorian writers of this genre being Jules Verne (1828-1905) from France and H. G. Wells (1866-1946). Wells was intrigued by MacDonald's use of mirrors in *Lilith* (1895). One might speculate that C. S. Lewis's space trilogy—*Out of the Silent Planet* (1938), *Perelandra* (1943), and *That Hideous Strength* (1945)—owe some debt to MacDonald generally and *Phantastes* specifically.

The sun, that had nursed them and loved them so long,
Grew weary of loving, and, turning back,
Hastened away on his southern track;
And helplessly hung each shrivelled leaf,
Faded away with an idle grief.
And the gusts of wind, sad Autumn's sighs,
Mournfully swept through their families;
Casting away with a helpless moan
All that he yet might call his own,
As the child, when his bird is gone for ever,
Flingeth the cage on the wandering river.
And the giant trees, as bare as Death,
Slowly bowed to the great Wind's breath;
And groaned with trying to keep from groaning
Amidst the young trees bending and moaning.
And the ancient planet's mighty sea
Was heaving and falling most restlessly,
And the tops of the waves were broken and white,
Tossing about to ease their might;
And the river was striving to reach the main,
And the ripple was hurrying back again.
Nature lived in sadness now;
Sadness lived on the maiden's brow,
As she watched, with a fixed, half-conscious eye,
One lonely leaf that trembled on high,
Till it dropped at last from the desolate bough—
Sorrow, oh, sorrow! 'tis winter now.
And her tears gushed forth, though it was but a leaf,
For little will loose the swollen fountain of grief:
When up to the lip the water goes,
It needs but a drop, and it overflows.

Oh! many and many a dreary year
Must pass away ere the buds appear;
Many a night of darksome sorrow
Yield to the light of a joyless morrow,
Ere birds again, on the clothed trees,
Shall fill the branches with melodies.
She will dream of meadows with wakeful streams;
Of wavy grass in the sunny beams;
Of hidden wells that soundless spring,

Hoarding their joy as a holy thing;
Of founts that tell it all day long
To the listening woods, with exultant song;
She will dream of evenings that die into nights,
Where each sense is filled with its own delights,
And the soul is still as the vaulted sky,
Lulled with an inner harmony;
And the flowers give out to the dewy night,
Changed into perfume, the gathered light;
And the darkness sinks upon all their host,
Till the sun sail up on the eastern coast—
She will wake and see the branches bare,
Weaving a net in the frozen air.

The story goes on to tell how, at last, weary with wintriness, she travelled towards the southern regions of her globe, to meet the spring on its slow way northwards; and how, after many sad adventures, many disappointed hopes, and many tears, bitter and fruitless, she found at last, one stormy afternoon, in a leafless forest, a single snowdrop growing betwixt the borders of the winter and spring. She lay down beside it and died. I almost believe that a child, pale and peaceful as a snowdrop, was born in the Earth within a fixed season from that stormy afternoon.

Chapter XIII

I saw a ship sailing upon the sea
Deeply laden as ship could be;
But not so deep as in love I am
For I care not whether I sink or swim.
OLD BALLAD.[1]

But Love is such a Mystery
I cannot find it out:
For when I think I'm best resolv'd,
I then am in most doubt.
SIR JOHN SUCKLING.[2]

One story I will try to reproduce. But, alas! it is like trying to reconstruct a forest out of broken branches and withered leaves. In the fairy book, everything was just as it should be, though whether in words or something else, I cannot tell. It glowed and flashed the thoughts upon the soul, with such a power that the medium disappeared from the consciousness, and it was occupied only with the things themselves. My representation of it must resemble a translation from a rich and powerful language, capable of embodying the thoughts of a splendidly developed people, into the meagre and half-articulate speech of a savage tribe. Of course, while I read it, I was Cosmo,[3] and his history was mine. Yet, all the time, I seemed to have a kind of double consciousness, and the story a double meaning.[4] Sometimes it seemed only to represent a simple story of ordinary life, perhaps almost of universal life; wherein two souls, loving each other and longing to come nearer, do, after all, but behold each other as in a glass darkly.[5]

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[1] Lines are from an old Scottish ballad, "The Water is Wide," dating from the seventeenth century. We note, for interest's sake, that Bob Dylan and Joan Baez sing a version of this song in the 1975 film *Renaldo and Clara.*

[2] Lines 13-18 from "I prithee send me back my heart" by the poet Sir John Suckling. Suckling (1609-1641) is associated with the Cavalier Poets, poets who supported King Charles I. Suckling is the inventor of the card game cribbage.

[3] English/Italian name meaning order, goodness, and beauty. Saint Cosmas was a third century physician who, along with his twin brother Damian, ministered to the poor and accepted no payment from their patients. The name also reminds us of cosmos, the universe as an orderly system.

[4] Doubleness is a feature of *Phantastes.* Anodos has more than one *doppelgänger* or double. The most obvious is his Shadow. Here he suggests that Cosmo in the story to follow is one of these *doppelgängers.*

As through the hard rock go the branching silver veins; as into the solid land run the creeks and gulfs from the unresting sea; as the lights and influences of the upper worlds sink silently through the earth's atmosphere; so doth Faerie invade the world of men, and sometimes startle the common eye with an association as of cause and effect, when between the two no connecting links can be traced.

Cosmo von Wehrstahl was a student at the University of Prague.[6] Though of a noble family, he was poor, and prided himself upon the independence that poverty gives; for what will not a man pride himself upon, when he cannot get rid of it? A favourite with his fellow students, he yet had no companions; and none of them had ever crossed the threshold of his lodging in the top of one of the highest houses in the old town. Indeed, the secret of much of that complaisance[7] which recommended him to his fellows, was the thought of his unknown retreat, whither in the evening he could betake himself, and indulge undisturbed in his own studies and reveries. These studies, besides those subjects necessary to his course at the University, embraced some less commonly known and approved; for in a secret drawer lay the works of Albertus Magnus and Cornelius Agrippa,[8] along with others less read and more abstruse. As yet, however, he had followed these researches only from curiosity, and had turned them to no practical purpose.

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[5] See 1 Corinthians 13:12. Paul says that now, in this world, we cannot see clearly; rather we see "darkly." In the future, we will see "face to face," that is, directly and fully.

[6] Cosmo von Wehrstahl and the University of Prague raise the world of German Romanticism and its sense of a world on the verge of the fantastic. German Romantic literature was fond of merging reality with fairy tale, as in the works of E. T. A. Hoffmann, whose *The Golden Pot* (1814) is an important influence on *Phantastes*. See Appendix C. In the late eighteenth century, German literature was influential in Prague, as James Naughton points out in *Czech Literature, 1774 to 1918*.

[7] Affability or ability to please others.

[8] Albertus Magnus (c. 1200-1278) was a thirteenth century scholar and theologian whose work encompassed philosophy, natural science, and theology. He is sometimes reputed to have been an alchemist, probably the connection MacDonald intends here. Cornelius Agrippa (1486-c.1535) was deeply interested in the occult; he was critical of Church hierarchies and a supporter of Martin Luther. Both these writers appear as influences on the young Victor Frankenstein in Mary Shelley's famous book (1818).

His lodging consisted of one large low-ceiled room, singularly bare of furniture; for besides a couple of wooden chairs, a couch which served for dreaming on both by day and night, and a great press[9] of black oak, there was very little in the room that could be called furniture. But curious instruments were heaped in the corners; and in one stood a skeleton, half-leaning against the wall, half-supported by a string about its neck. One of its hands, all of fingers, rested on the heavy pommel of a great sword that stood beside it. Various weapons were scattered about over the floor. The walls were utterly bare of adornment; for the few strange things, such as a large dried bat with wings dispread, the skin of a porcupine, and a stuffed sea-mouse,[10] could hardly be reckoned as such. But although his fancy delighted in vagaries like these, he indulged his imagination with far different fare. His mind had never yet been filled with an absorbing passion; but it lay like a still twilight open to any wind, whether the low breath that wafts but odours, or the storm that bows the great trees till they strain and creak. He saw everything as through a rose-coloured glass. When he looked from his window on the street below, not a maiden passed but she moved as in a story, and drew his thoughts after her till she disappeared in the vista. When he walked in the streets, he always felt as if reading a tale, into which he sought to weave every face of interest that went by; and every sweet voice swept his soul as with the wing of a passing angel. He was in fact a poet without words;[11] the more absorbed and endangered, that the springing-waters were dammed back into his soul, where, finding no utterance, they grew, and swelled, and undermined. He used to lie on his hard couch, and read a tale or a poem, till the book dropped from his hand; but he dreamed on, he knew not whether awake or asleep, until the opposite roof grew upon his sense, and turned golden in the sunrise. Then he arose too; and the impulses of vigorous youth kept him ever active, either in study or in sport, until again the close of the day left him free; and the world of night, which had lain drowned in the cataract of the day, rose up in his soul, with all its stars, and dim-seen phantom shapes. But this could hardly last long. Some one form must sooner or later step within the charmed circle, enter the house of life, and compel the bewildered magician to kneel and worship.

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[9] Cupboard.

[10] Sea-mouse, or Aphrodita, is a marine worm found at the bottom of the ocean. The various animal bits in Cosmo's room are reminders of his scientific interests and the eccentricity of these interests. In Adelbert von Chamisso's "Peter Schlemihl" (1814), Chamisso pictures himself seated at his table "between a skeleton and a parcel of dried plants" (*Great German Short Stories*, edited by Lewis Melville and Reginald Hargreaves, 626). See Appendix C. Since C. S. Lewis takes pain to discuss the importance of *Phantastes* to his development as a persona and writer, it is tempting to connect this sea-mouse with Lewis's chivalric mouse that travels the sea—Reepicheep, who appears in *Prince Caspian* (1951), *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (1952), and *The Last Battle* (1956).

[11] "Poet without words" is a phrase that appears in a review of recent poetry in the *Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art*, volume 20 (June 1850), 170. The phrase is another example of an oxymoron, and it appears here right after the synesthetic coupling of sound and touch in the reference to a sweet voice sweeping past like a wing of an angel.

One afternoon, towards dusk, he was wandering dreamily in one of the principal streets, when a fellow student roused him by a slap on the shoulder, and asked him to accompany him into a little back alley to look at some old armour which he had taken a fancy to possess. Cosmo was considered an authority in every matter pertaining to arms, ancient or modern. In the use of weapons, none of the students could come near him; and his practical acquaintance with some had principally contributed to establish his authority in reference to all. He accompanied him willingly. They entered a narrow alley, and thence a dirty little court, where a low arched door admitted them into a heterogeneous assemblage of everything musty, and dusty, and old, that could well be imagined. His verdict on the armour was satisfactory, and his companion at once concluded the purchase. As they were leaving the place, Cosmo's eye was attracted by an old mirror of an elliptical shape,[12] which leaned against the wall, covered with dust. Around it was some curious carving, which he could see but very indistinctly by the glimmering light which the owner of the shop carried in his hand. It was this carving that attracted his attention; at least so it appeared to him. He left the place, however, with his friend, taking no further notice of it. They walked together to the main street, where they parted and took opposite directions.

No sooner was Cosmo left alone, than the thought of the curious old mirror[13] returned to him. A strong desire to see it more plainly arose within him, and he directed his steps once more towards the shop. The owner opened the door when he knocked, as if he had expected him. He was a little, old, withered man, with a hooked nose, and burning eyes constantly in a slow restless motion, and looking here and there as if after something that eluded them. Pretending to examine several other articles, Cosmo at last approached the mirror, and requested to have it taken down.

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[12] Oval shape.

[13] The mirror is an ancient metaphor suggesting truth and vanity and self-understanding and otherness in its various usages. The magic mirror is familiar in German Romantic literature; for example, magic mirrors appear in De La Motte Fouqué's *The Magic Ring* (1825), and in Hoffmann's *Adventures of a New Year's Night* (1816). And of course there is the talking mirror in the story of Snow White.

"Take it down yourself, master; I cannot reach it," said the old man.

Cosmo took it down carefully, when he saw that the carving was indeed delicate and costly, being both of admirable design and execution; containing withal many devices which seemed to embody some meaning to which he had no clue. This, naturally, in one of his tastes and temperament, increased the interest he felt in the old mirror; so much, indeed, that he now longed to possess it, in order to study its frame at his leisure. He pretended, however, to want it only for use; and saying he feared the plate could be of little service, as it was rather old, he brushed away a little of the dust from its face, expecting to see a dull reflection within. His surprise was great when he found the reflection brilliant, revealing a glass not only uninjured by age, but wondrously clear and perfect (should the whole correspond to this part) even for one newly from the hands of the maker. He asked carelessly what the owner wanted for the thing. The old man replied by mentioning a sum of money far beyond the reach of poor Cosmo, who proceeded to replace the mirror where it had stood before.

"You think the price too high?" said the old man.

"I do not know that it is too much for you to ask," replied Cosmo; "but it is far too much for me to give."

The old man held up his light towards Cosmo's face. "I like your look," said he.

Cosmo could not return the compliment. In fact, now he looked closely at him for the first time, he felt a kind of repugnance to him, mingled with a strange feeling of doubt whether a man or a woman stood before him.

"What is your name?" he continued.

"Cosmo von Wehrstahl."

"Ah, ah! I thought as much. I see your father in you. I knew your father very well, young sir. I dare say in some odd corners of my house, you might find some old things with his crest and cipher[14] upon them still. Well, I like you: you shall have the mirror at the fourth part of what I asked for it; but upon one condition."

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[14] A crest is what appears on a coat of arms, and a cipher is a monogram or a decorative presentation of one's initials. For Cosmo's father to have had a crest and cipher indicates that he comes from the upper class.

"What is that?" said Cosmo; for, although the price was still a great deal for him to give, he could just manage it; and the desire to possess the mirror had increased to an altogether unaccountable degree, since it had seemed beyond his reach.

"That if you should ever want to get rid of it again, you will let me have the first offer."

"Certainly," replied Cosmo, with a smile; adding, "a moderate condition indeed."

"On your honour?" insisted the seller.

"On my honour," said the buyer; and the bargain was concluded.

"I will carry it home for you," said the old man, as Cosmo took it in his hands.

"No, no; I will carry it myself," said he; for he had a peculiar dislike to revealing his residence to any one, and more especially to this person, to whom he felt every moment a greater antipathy.[15]

"Just as you please," said the old creature, and muttered to himself as he held his light at the door to show him out of the court: "Sold for the sixth time! I wonder what will be the upshot of it this time. I should think my lady had enough of it by now!"

Cosmo carried his prize carefully home. But all the way he had an uncomfortable feeling that he was watched and dogged. Repeatedly he looked about, but saw nothing to justify his suspicions. Indeed, the streets were too crowded and too ill lighted to expose very readily a careful spy, if such there should be at his heels. He reached his lodging in safety, and leaned his purchase against the wall, rather relieved, strong as he was, to be rid of its weight; then, lighting his pipe, threw himself on the couch, and was soon lapt in the folds of one of his haunting dreams.

He returned home earlier than usual the next day, and fixed the mirror to the wall, over the hearth, at one end of his long room. He then carefully wiped away the dust from its face, and, clear as the water of a sunny spring, the mirror shone out from beneath the envious covering. But his interest was chiefly occupied with the curious carving of the frame. This he cleaned as well as he could with a brush; and then he proceeded to a minute examination of its various parts, in the hope of discovering some index to the intention of the carver. In this, however, he was unsuccessful; and, at length, pausing with some weariness and disappointment, he gazed vacantly for a few moments into the depth of the reflected room. But ere long he said, half aloud: "What a strange thing a mirror is! and what a wondrous affinity exists between it and a man's imagination![16] For this room of mine, as I behold it in the glass, is the same, and yet not the same. It is not the mere representation of the room I live in, but it looks just as if I were reading about it in a story I like. All its commonness has disappeared. The mirror has lifted it out of the region of fact into the realm of art; and the very representing of it to me has clothed with interest that which was otherwise hard and bare; just as one sees with delight upon the stage the representation of a character from which one would escape in life as from something unendurably wearisome. But is it not rather that art rescues nature from the weary and sated[17] regards of our senses, and the degrading injustice of our anxious every-day life, and, appealing to the imagination, which dwells apart, reveals Nature in some degree as she really is, and as she represents herself to the eye of the child, whose every-day life, fearless and unambitious, meets the true import of the wonder-teeming world around him, and rejoices therein without questioning? That skeleton, now—I almost fear it, standing there so still, with eyes only for the unseen, like a watch-tower looking across all the waste of this busy world into the quiet regions of rest beyond. And yet I know every bone and every joint in it as well as my own fist. And that old battle-axe looks as if any moment it might be caught up by a mailed hand, and, borne forth by the mighty arm, go crashing through casque,[18] and skull, and brain, invading the Unknown with yet another bewildered ghost. I should like to live in *that* room if I could only get into it."[19]

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[15] Dislike. The old man strikes Cosmo as strange, perhaps even malevolent.

Scarcely had the half-moulded words floated from him, as he stood gazing into the mirror, when, striking him as with a flash of amazement that fixed him in his posture, noiseless and unannounced, glided suddenly through the door into the reflected room, with stately motion, yet reluctant and faltering step, the graceful form of a woman, clothed all in white. Her back only was visible as she walked slowly up to the couch in the further end of the room, on which she laid herself wearily, turning towards him a face of unutterable loveliness, in which suffering, and dislike, and a sense of compulsion, strangely mingled with the beauty. He stood without the power of motion for some moments, with his eyes irrecoverably fixed upon her; and even after he was conscious of the ability to move, he could not summon up courage to turn and look on her, face to face, in the veritable[20] chamber in which he stood. At length, with a sudden effort, in which the exercise of the will was so pure, that it seemed involuntary, he turned his face to the couch. It was vacant. In bewilderment, mingled with terror, he turned again to the mirror: there, on the reflected couch, lay the exquisite lady-form. She lay with closed eyes, whence two large tears were just welling from beneath the veiling lids; still as death, save for the convulsive motion of her bosom.

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[16] The mirror represents art and imagination in the story of Cosmo. It may also be a trap that must be opened (or smashed).

[17] Overly satisfied, too much.

[18] Steel helmet with a nose guard.

[19] The room in the mirror strikes Cosmo's imagination as if it was the Platonic perfection, a room that restores innocence or in which innocence reigns.

Cosmo himself could not have described what he felt. His emotions were of a kind that destroyed consciousness, and could never be clearly recalled. He could not help standing yet by the mirror, and keeping his eyes fixed on the lady, though he was painfully aware of his rudeness, and feared every moment that she would open hers, and meet his fixed regard. But he was, ere long, a little relieved; for, after a while, her eyelids slowly rose, and her eyes remained uncovered, but unemployed for a time; and when, at length, they began to wander about the room, as if languidly seeking to make some acquaintance with her environment, they were never directed towards him: it seemed nothing but what was in the mirror could affect her vision; and, therefore, if she saw him at all, it could only be his back, which, of necessity, was turned towards her in the glass. The two figures in the mirror could not meet face to face, except he turned and looked at her, present in his room; and, as she was not there, he concluded that if he were to turn towards the part in his room corresponding to that in which she lay, his reflection would either be invisible to her altogether, or at least it must appear to her to gaze vacantly towards her, and no meeting of the eyes would produce the impression of spiritual proximity. By and by her eyes fell upon the skeleton, and he saw her shudder and close them. She did not open them again, but signs of repugnance continued evident on her countenance. Cosmo would have removed the obnoxious thing at once, but he feared to discompose her yet more by the assertion of his presence, which the act would involve. So he stood and watched her. The eyelids yet shrouded the eyes, as a costly case the jewels within; the troubled expression gradually faded from the countenance, leaving only a faint sorrow behind; the features settled into an unchanging expression of rest; and by these signs, and the slow regular motion of her breathing, Cosmo knew that she slept. He could now gaze on her without embarrassment. He saw that her figure, dressed in the simplest robe of white, was worthy of her face; and so harmonious, that either the delicately moulded foot, or any finger of the equally delicate hand, was an index to the whole. As she lay, her whole form manifested the relaxation of perfect repose. He gazed till he was weary, and at last seated himself near the new-found shrine,[21] and mechanically took up a book, like one who watches by a sick-bed. But his eyes gathered no thoughts from the page before him. His intellect had been stunned by the bold contradiction, to its face, of all its experience, and now lay passive, without assertion, or speculation, or even conscious astonishment; while his imagination sent one wild dream of blessedness after another coursing through his soul. How long he sat he knew not; but at length he roused himself, rose, and, trembling in every portion of his frame, looked again into the mirror. She was gone. The mirror reflected faithfully what his room presented, and nothing more. It stood there like a golden setting whence the central jewel has been stolen away; like a night-sky without the glory of its stars. She had carried with her all the strangeness of the reflected room. It had sunk to the level of the one without. But when the first pangs of his disappointment had passed, Cosmo began to comfort himself with the hope that she might return, perhaps the next evening, at the same hour. Resolving that if she did, she should not at least be scared by the hateful skeleton, he removed that and several other articles of questionable appearance into a recess by the side of the hearth, whence they could not possibly cast any reflection into the mirror; and having made his poor room as tidy as he could, sought the solace of the open sky and of a night wind that had begun to blow; for he could not rest where he was. When he returned, somewhat composed, he could hardly prevail with himself to lie down on his bed; for he could not help feeling as if she had lain upon it; and for him to lie there now would be something like sacrilege. However, weariness prevailed; and laying himself on the couch, dressed as he was, he slept till day.

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[20] The actual room in which he stands, the real room outside the mirror.

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[21] Place for worship of a special or holy person. Cosmo is now infatuated with the lady in white. She has become his saintly love interest. His imagination has taken flight and his emotional life, focused on this woman, now holds sway over his intellect.

With a beating heart, beating till he could hardly breathe, he stood in dumb[22] hope before the mirror, on the following evening. Again the reflected room shone as through a purple vapour in the gathering twilight. Everything seemed waiting like himself for a coming splendour to glorify its poor earthliness with the presence of a heavenly joy. And just as the room vibrated with the strokes of the neighbouring church bell, announcing the hour of six, in glided the pale beauty, and again laid herself on the couch. Poor Cosmo nearly lost his senses with delight. She was there once more! Her eyes sought the corner where the skeleton had stood, and a faint gleam of satisfaction crossed her face, apparently at seeing it empty. She looked suffering still, but there was less of discomfort expressed in her countenance than there had been the night before. She took more notice of the things about her, and seemed to gaze with some curiosity on the strange apparatus standing here and there in her room. At length, however, drowsiness seemed to overtake her, and again she fell asleep. Resolved not to lose sight of her this time, Cosmo watched the sleeping form. Her slumber was so deep and absorbing, that a fascinating repose seemed to pass contagiously from her to him, as he gazed upon her; and he started as if awakening from a dream, when the lady moved, and, without opening her eyes, rose, and passed from the room with the gait of a somnambulist.[23]

Cosmo was now in a state of extravagant delight. Most men have a secret treasure somewhere. The miser has his golden hoard; the virtuoso[24] his pet ring; the student his rare book; the poet his favourite haunt; the lover his secret drawer; but Cosmo had a mirror with a lovely lady in it. And now that he knew by the skeleton, that she was affected by the things around her, he had a new object in life: he would turn the bare chamber in the mirror into a room such as no lady need disdain to call her own. This he could effect only by furnishing and adorning his. And Cosmo was poor. Yet he possessed accomplishments that could be turned to account; although, hitherto, he had preferred living on his slender allowance, to increasing his means by what his pride considered unworthy of his rank. He was the best swordsman in the University; and now he offered to give lessons in fencing and similar exercises, to such as chose to pay him well for the trouble. His proposal was heard with surprise by the students; but it was eagerly accepted by many; and soon his instructions were not confined to the richer students, but were anxiously sought by many of the young nobility of Prague and its neighbourhood. So that very soon he had a good deal of money at his command. The first thing he did was to remove his apparatus and oddities into a closet in the room. Then he placed his bed and a few other necessaries on each side of the hearth, and parted them from the rest of the room by two screens of Indian fabric.[25] Then he put an elegant couch for the lady to lie upon, in the corner where his bed had formerly stood; and, by degrees, every day adding some article of luxury, converted it, at length, into a rich boudoir.[26]

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[22] In this case, silent or incapable of speech, but the other meaning—lacking intelligence or use of the intellect—is also appropriate.

[23] Sleepwalker.

[24] Not only a skilled performer (especially in music), but one with a taste for and knowledge of the fine arts.

Every night, about the same time, the lady entered. The first time she saw the new couch, she started with a half-smile; then her face grew very sad, the tears came to her eyes, and she laid herself upon the couch, and pressed her face into the silken cushions, as if to hide from everything. She took notice of each addition and each change as the work proceeded; and a look of acknowledgment, as if she knew that some one was ministering to her, and was grateful for it, mingled with the constant look of suffering. At length, after she had lain down as usual one evening, her eyes fell upon some paintings with which Cosmo had just finished adorning the walls. She rose, and to his great delight, walked across the room, and proceeded to examine them carefully, testifying much pleasure in her looks as she did so. But again the sorrowful, tearful expression returned, and again she buried her face in the pillows of her couch. Gradually, however, her countenance had grown more composed; much of the suffering manifest on her first appearance had vanished, and a kind of quiet, hopeful expression had taken its place; which, however, frequently gave way to an anxious, troubled look, mingled with something of sympathetic pity.

Meantime, how fared Cosmo? As might be expected in one of his temperament, his interest had blossomed into love, and his love—shall I call it *ripened*, or—*withered* into passion. But, alas! he loved a shadow. He could not come near her, could not speak to her, could not hear a sound from those sweet lips, to which his longing eyes would cling like bees to their honey-founts. Ever and anon, he sang to himself:

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[25] Indian fabric was painted and dyed cotton made in India for the English market. See the entry on Indian fabric at the Victoria and Albert Museum website: http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/i/indian-textiles-introduction/.

[26] Beautifully decorated bedroom for a woman.

> "I shall die for love of the maiden;"

and ever he looked again, and died not, though his heart seemed ready to break with intensity of life and longing. And the more he did for her, the more he loved her; and he hoped that, although she never appeared to see him, yet she was pleased to think that one unknown would give his life to her. He tried to comfort himself over his separation from her, by thinking that perhaps some day she would see him and make signs to him, and that would satisfy him; "for," thought he, "is not this all that a loving soul can do to enter into communion with another? Nay, how many who love never come nearer than to behold each other as in a mirror; seem to know and yet never know the inward life; never enter the other soul; and part at last, with but the vaguest notion of the universe on the borders of which they have been hovering for years? If I could but speak to her, and knew that she heard me, I should be satisfied." Once he contemplated painting a picture on the wall, which should, of necessity, convey to the lady a thought of himself; but, though he had some skill with the pencil, he found his hand tremble so much when he began the attempt, that he was forced to give it up.[27]

One evening, as he stood gazing on his treasure, he thought he saw a faint expression of self-consciousness on her countenance, as if she surmised that passionate eyes were fixed upon her. This grew; till at last the red blood rose over her neck, and cheek, and brow. Cosmo's longing to approach her became almost delirious. This night she was dressed in an evening costume, resplendent with diamonds. This could add nothing to her beauty, but it presented it in a new aspect; enabled her loveliness to make a new manifestation of itself in a new embodiment. For essential beauty[28] is infinite; and, as the soul of Nature needs an endless succession of varied forms to embody her loveliness, countless faces of beauty springing forth, not any two the same, at every one of her heart-throbs; so the individual form needs an infinite change of its environments, to enable it to uncover all the phases of its loveliness. Diamonds glittered from amidst her hair, half hidden in its luxuriance, like stars through dark rain-clouds; and the bracelets on her white arms flashed all the colours of a rainbow of lightnings, as she lifted her snowy hands to cover her burning face. But her beauty shone down all its adornment. "If I might have but one of her feet to kiss," thought Cosmo, "I should be content." Alas! he deceived himself, for passion is never content. Nor did he know that there are *two* ways out of her enchanted house. But, suddenly, as if the pang had been driven into his heart from without, revealing itself first in pain, and afterwards in definite form, the thought darted into his mind, "She has a lover somewhere. Remembered words of his bring the colour on her face now. I am nowhere to her. She lives in another world all day, and all night, after she leaves me. Why does she come and make me love her, till I, a strong man, am too faint to look upon her more?" He looked again, and her face was pale as a lily. A sorrowful compassion seemed to rebuke the glitter of the restless jewels, and the slow tears rose in her eyes. She left her room sooner this evening than was her wont. Cosmo remained alone, with a feeling as if his bosom had been suddenly left empty and hollow, and the weight of the whole world was crushing in its walls. The next evening, for the first time since she began to come, she came not.

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[27] In the 1905 version the following line is inserted after this paragraph: "Who lives, he dies; who dies, he is alive."

[28] Compare with Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1819): "'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,'—that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know" (lines 46–50).

And now Cosmo was in wretched plight. Since the thought of a rival had occurred to him, he could not rest for a moment. More than ever he longed to see the lady face to face. He persuaded himself that if he but knew the worst he would be satisfied; for then he could abandon Prague, and find that relief in constant motion, which is the hope of all active minds when invaded by distress. Meantime he waited with unspeakable anxiety for the next night, hoping she would return; but she did not appear. And now he fell really ill. Rallied by his fellow-students on his wretched looks, he ceased to attend the lectures. His engagements were neglected. He cared for nothing. The sky, with the great sun in it, was to him a heartless, burning desert. The men and women in the streets were mere puppets, without motives in themselves, or interest to him. He saw them all as on the ever-changing field of a *camera obscura*.[29] She—she alone and altogether—was his universe, his well of life, his incarnate good. For six evenings she came not. Let his absorbing passion, and the slow fever that was consuming his brain, be his excuse for the resolution which he had taken and begun to execute, before that time had expired.

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[29] Latin phrase meaning a darkened room. The *camera obscura* MacDonald refers to is a device for casting an image through a small hole onto a wall or a screen. If the device is box-like, then the image is cast onto one end of the dark inside of the box. In other words, Cosmos is in a funk and he sees the people and things around him as if they were simply optical phenomena, and as such, to him they lack substantiality or reality.

Reasoning with himself, that it must be by some enchantment connected with the mirror, that the form of the lady was to be seen in it, he determined to attempt to turn to account what he had hitherto studied principally from curiosity. "For," said he to himself, "if a spell can force her presence in that glass (and she came unwillingly at first), may not a stronger spell, such as I know, especially with the aid of her half-presence in the mirror, if ever she appears again, compel her living form to come to me here? If I do her wrong, let love be my excuse. I want only to know my doom from her own lips." He never doubted, all the time, that she was a real earthly woman; or, rather, that there was a woman, who, somehow or other, threw this reflection of her form into the magic mirror.

He opened his secret drawer, took out his books of magic,[30] lighted his lamp, and read and made notes from midnight till three in the morning, for three successive nights. Then he replaced his books; and the next night went out in quest of the materials necessary for the conjuration.[31] These were not easy to find; for, in love-charms and all incantations of this nature, ingredients are employed scarcely fit to be mentioned, and for the thought even of which, in connexion with her, he could only excuse himself on the score of his bitter need. At length he succeeded in procuring all he required; and on the seventh evening from that on which she had last appeared, he found himself prepared for the exercise of unlawful and tyrannical power.

He cleared the centre of the room; stooped and drew a circle of red on the floor, around the spot where he stood; wrote in the four quarters mystical signs, and numbers which were all powers of seven or nine; examined the whole ring carefully, to see that no smallest break had occurred in the circumference; and then rose from his bending posture. As he rose, the church clock struck seven; and, just as she had appeared the first time, reluctant, slow, and stately, glided in the lady. Cosmo trembled; and when, turning, she revealed a countenance worn and wan, as with sickness or inward trouble, he grew faint, and felt as if he dared not proceed. But as he gazed on the face and form, which now possessed his whole soul, to the exclusion of all other joys and griefs, the longing to speak to her, to know that she heard him, to hear from her one word in return, became so unendurable, that he suddenly and hastily resumed his preparations. Stepping carefully from the circle, he put a small brazier into its centre. He then set fire to its contents of charcoal, and while it burned up, opened his window and seated himself, waiting, beside it.

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[30] "Books of magic," typically known as grimoires, gave instructions for spells of various kinds. More recently, we see such books of magic in fantasy series such as the Harry Potter books, but the existence of grimoires dates back centuries.

[31] Magic incantation or spell. In order to accomplish a spell, the magician or wizard requires certain items. See for example, the Witches' song from *Macbeth* (Act 4, Scene 1, lines 1-47).

It was a sultry evening. The air was full of thunder. A sense of luxurious depression filled the brain. The sky seemed to have grown heavy, and to compress the air beneath it. A kind of purplish tinge pervaded the atmosphere, and through the open window came the scents of the distant fields, which all the vapours of the city could not quench. Soon the charcoal glowed. Cosmo sprinkled upon it the incense and other substances which he had compounded, and, stepping within the circle, turned his face from the brazier and towards the mirror. Then, fixing his eyes upon the face of the lady, he began with a trembling voice to repeat a powerful incantation. He had not gone far, before the lady grew pale; and then, like a returning wave, the blood washed all its banks with its crimson tide, and she hid her face in her hands. Then he passed to a conjuration stronger yet. The lady rose and walked uneasily to and fro in her room. Another spell; and she seemed seeking with her eyes for some object on which they wished to rest. At length it seemed as if she suddenly espied him; for her eyes fixed themselves full and wide upon his, and she drew gradually, and somewhat unwillingly, close to her side of the mirror, just as if his eyes had fascinated her. Cosmo had never seen her so near before. Now at least, eyes met eyes; but he could not quite understand the expression of hers. They were full of tender entreaty, but there was something more that he could not interpret. Though his heart seemed to labour in his throat, he would allow no delight or agitation to turn him from his task. Looking still in her face, he passed on to the mightiest charm he knew. Suddenly the lady turned and walked out of the door of her reflected chamber. A moment after she entered his room with veritable presence; and, forgetting all his precautions, he sprang from the charmed circle, and knelt before her. There she stood, the living lady of his passionate visions, alone beside him, in a thundery twilight, and the glow of a magic fire.

"Why," said the lady, with a trembling voice, "didst thou bring a poor maiden through the rainy streets alone?"

"Because I am dying for love of thee; but I only brought thee from the mirror there."

"Ah, the mirror!" and she looked up at it, and shuddered. "Alas! I am but a slave, while that mirror exists. But do not think it was the power of thy spells that drew me; it was thy longing desire to see me, that beat at the door of my heart, till I was forced to yield."[32]

"Canst thou love me then?" said Cosmo, in a voice calm as death, but almost inarticulate with emotion.

"I do not know," she replied sadly; "that I cannot tell, so long as I am bewildered with enchantments. It were indeed a joy too great, to lay my head on thy bosom and weep to death; for I think thou lovest me, though I do not know;—but—"

Cosmo rose from his knees.

"I love thee as—nay, I know not what—for since I have loved thee, there is nothing else."

He seized her hand: she withdrew it.

"No, better not; I am in thy power, and therefore I may not."[33]

She burst into tears, and, kneeling before him in her turn, said—

"Cosmo, if thou lovest me, set me free, even from thyself; break the mirror."

"And shall I see thyself instead?"

"That I cannot tell. I will not deceive thee; we may never meet again."

A fierce struggle arose in Cosmo's bosom. Now she was in his power. She did not dislike him at least; and he could see her when he would. To break the mirror would be to destroy his very life, to banish out of his universe the only glory it possessed. The whole world would be but a prison, if he annihilated the one window that looked into the paradise of love. Not yet pure in love, he hesitated.

With a wail of sorrow, the lady rose to her feet. "Ah! he loves me not; he loves me not even as I love him; and alas! I care more for his love than even for the freedom I ask."

"I will not wait to be willing," cried Cosmo; and sprang to the corner where the great sword stood.

Meantime it had grown very dark; only the embers cast a red glow through the room. He seized the sword by the steel scabbard,[34] and stood before the mirror; but as he heaved a great blow at it with the heavy pommel, the blade slipped half-way out of the scabbard, and the pommel struck the wall above the mirror. At that moment, a terrible clap of thunder seemed to burst in the very room beside them;

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[32] Here the lady states that magic is not effective, but passion and desire are. In this way, MacDonald discounts the efficacy of magic.

[33] "I am in thy power, and therefore I may not" appears to be a paradox. The lady seems to indicate that for her to acquiesce to Cosmos's desire, she should be able to exert her own will and not merely accede to another's.

[34] Sword case or sheath.

and ere Cosmo could repeat the blow, he fell senseless on the hearth. When he came to himself, he found that the lady and the mirror had both disappeared. He was seized with a brain fever, which kept him to his couch for weeks.

When he recovered his reason, he began to think what could have become of the mirror. For the lady, he hoped she had found her way back as she came; but as the mirror involved her fate with its own, he was more immediately anxious about that. He could not think she had carried it away. It was much too heavy, even if it had not been too firmly fixed in the wall, for her to remove it. Then again, he remembered the thunder; which made him believe that it was not the lightning, but some other blow that had struck him down. He concluded that, either by supernatural agency, he having exposed himself to the vengeance of the demons in leaving the circle of safety, or in some other mode, the mirror had probably found its way back to its former owner; and, horrible to think of, might have been by this time once more disposed of, delivering up the lady into the power of another man; who, if he used his power no worse than he himself had done, might yet give Cosmo abundant cause to curse the selfish indecision which prevented him from shattering the mirror at once. Indeed, to think that she whom he loved, and who had prayed to him for freedom, should be still at the mercy, in some degree, of the possessor of the mirror, and was at least exposed to his constant observation, was in itself enough to madden a chary[35] lover.

Anxiety to be well retarded his recovery; but at length he was able to creep abroad. He first made his way to the old broker's, pretending to be in search of something else. A laughing sneer on the creature's face convinced him that he knew all about it; but he could not see it amongst his furniture, or get any information out of him as to what had become of it. He expressed the utmost surprise at hearing it had been stolen; a surprise which Cosmo saw at once to be counterfeited; while, at the same time, he fancied that the old wretch was not at all anxious to have it mistaken for genuine. Full of distress, which he concealed as well as he could, he made many searches, but with no avail. Of course he could ask no questions; but he kept his ears awake for any remotest hint that might set him in a direction of search. He never went out without a short heavy hammer of steel about him, that he might shatter the mirror the moment he was made happy by the sight of his lost treasure, if ever that blessed moment should arrive. Whether he should see the lady again, was now a thought altogether secondary, and postponed to the achievement of her freedom. He wandered here and there, like an anxious ghost, pale and haggard; gnawed ever at the heart by the thought of what she might be suffering—all from his fault.

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[35] Careful, reluctant to do something, just as Cosmos had been reluctant to break the mirror.

One night, he mingled with a crowd that filled the rooms of one of the most distinguished mansions in the city; for he accepted every invitation, that he might lose no chance, however poor, of obtaining some information that might expedite his discovery. Here he wandered about, listening to every stray word that he could catch, in the hope of a revelation. As he approached some ladies who were talking quietly in a corner, one said to another: "Have you heard of the strange illness of the Princess von Hohenweiss?"[36]

"Yes; she has been ill for more than a year now. It is very sad for so fine a creature to have such a terrible malady. She was better for some weeks lately, but within the last few days, the same attacks have returned, apparently accompanied with more suffering than ever. It is altogether an inexplicable story."

"Is there a story connected with her illness?"

"I have only heard imperfect reports of it; but it is said that she gave offence some eighteen months ago to an old woman who had held an office of trust in the family, and who, after some incoherent threats, disappeared. This peculiar affection[37] followed soon after. But the strangest part of the story is its association with the loss of an antique mirror, which stood in her dressing-room, and of which she constantly made use."

Here the speaker's voice sank to a whisper; and Cosmo, although his very soul sat listening in his ears, could hear no more. He trembled too much to dare to address the ladies, even if it had been advisable to expose himself to their curiosity. The name of the Princess was well known to him, but he had never seen her; except indeed it was she, which now he hardly doubted, who had knelt before him on that dreadful night. Fearful of attracting attention, for, from the weak state of his health, he could not recover an appearance of calmness, he made his way to the open air, and reached his lodgings; glad in this, that he at least knew where she lived, although he never dreamed of approaching her openly, even if he should be happy enough to free her from her hateful bondage. He hoped, too, that as he had unexpectedly learned so much, the other and far more important part might be revealed to him ere long.

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[36] *Hohenweiss* translates as high-ranking or tall white person. MacDonald neatly puns on the White Lady trope in this fantasy.

[37] *Affection* here means disease or abnormal state of mind or body.

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"Have you seen Steinwald lately?"

"No, I have not seen him for some time. He is almost a match for me at the rapier, and I suppose he thinks he needs no more lessons."

"I wonder what has become of him. I want to see him very much. Let me see: the last time I saw him, he was coming out of that old broker's den, to which, if you remember, you accompanied me once, to look at some armour. That is fully three weeks ago."

This hint was enough for Cosmo. Von Steinwald[38] was a man of influence in the court, well known for his reckless habits and fierce passions. The very possibility that the mirror should be in his possession was hell itself to Cosmo. But violent or hasty measures of any sort were most unlikely to succeed. All that he wanted was an opportunity of breaking the fatal glass; and to obtain this, he must bide his time. He revolved many plans in his mind, but without being able to fix upon any.

At length, one evening, as he was passing the house of Von Steinwald, he saw the windows more than usually brilliant. He watched for a while; and seeing that company began to arrive, hastened home, and dressed as richly as he could, in the hope of mingling with the guests unquestioned; in effecting which, there could be no difficulty for a man of his carriage.[39]

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In a lofty, silent chamber, in another part of the city, lay a form more like marble than a living woman. The loveliness of death seemed frozen upon her face, for her lips were rigid, and her eyelids closed. Her long white hands were crossed over her breast, and no breathing disturbed their repose. Beside the dead, men speak in whispers, as if the deepest rest of all could be broken by the sound of a living voice. Just so, though the soul was evidently beyond the reach of all intimations from the senses, the two ladies, who sat beside her, spoke in the gentlest tones of subdued sorrow.

"She has lain so for an hour."

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[38] Steinwald (stone forest) is a volatile personality and a man who is influential among the upper class in Prague.

[39] Person's manner of behaviour or way of presenting himself or herself to others.

"This cannot last long, I fear."

"How much thinner she has grown within the last few weeks! If she would only speak, and explain what she suffers, it would be better for her. I think she has visions in her trances, but nothing can induce her to refer to them when she is awake."

"Does she ever speak in these trances?"

"I have never heard her; but they say she walks sometimes, and once put the whole household in a terrible fright by disappearing for a whole hour, and returning drenched with rain, and almost dead with exhaustion and fright. But even then she would give no account of what had happened."

A scarce audible murmur from the yet motionless lips of the lady here startled her attendants. After several ineffectual attempts at articulation, the word "*Cosmo!*" burst from her. Then she lay still as before; but only for a moment. With a wild cry, she sprang from the couch erect on the floor, flung her arms above her head, with clasped and straining hands, and, her wide eyes flashing with light, called aloud, with a voice exultant as that of a spirit bursting from a sepulchre, "I am free! I am free! I thank thee!" Then she flung herself on the couch, and sobbed; then rose, and paced wildly up and down the room, with gestures of mingled delight and anxiety. Then turning to her motionless attendants—"Quick, Lisa, my cloak and hood!" Then lower—"I must go to him. Make haste, Lisa! You may come with me, if you will."

In another moment they were in the street, hurrying along towards one of the bridges over the Moldau.[40] The moon was near the zenith, and the streets were almost empty. The Princess soon outstripped her attendant, and was half-way over the bridge, before the other reached it.

"Are you free, lady? The mirror is broken: are you free?"

The words were spoken close beside her, as she hurried on. She turned; and there, leaning on the parapet in a recess of the bridge, stood Cosmo, in a splendid dress, but with a white and quivering face.

"Cosmo!—I am free—and thy servant for ever. I was coming to you now."

"And I to you, for Death made me bold; but I could get no further. Have I atoned at all? Do I love you a little—truly?"

"Ah, I know now that you love me, my Cosmo; but what do you say about death?"

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[40] River that passes through Prague.

He did not reply. His hand was pressed against his side. She looked more closely: the blood was welling from between the fingers. She flung her arms around him with a faint bitter wail.

When Lisa came up, she found her mistress kneeling above a wan dead face, which smiled on in the spectral moonbeams.

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And now I will say no more about these wondrous volumes; though I could tell many a tale out of them, and could, perhaps, vaguely represent some entrancing thoughts of a deeper kind which I found within them. From many a sultry noon till twilight, did I sit in that grand hall, buried and risen again in these old books. And I trust I have carried away in my soul some of the exhalations of their undying leaves. In after hours of deserved or needful sorrow, portions of what I read there have often come to me again, with an unexpected comforting; which was not fruitless, even though the comfort might seem in itself groundless and vain.

Chapter XIV

> Your gallery
> Have we pass'd through, not without much content
> In many singularities; but we saw not
> That which my daughter came to look upon,
> The statue of her mother.
>
> *Winter's Tale.*[1]

It seemed to me strange, that all this time I had heard no music in the fairy palace. I was convinced there must be music in it, but that my sense was as yet too gross to receive the influence of those mysterious motions that beget sound. Sometimes I felt sure, from the way the few figures of which I got such transitory glimpses passed me, or glided into vacancy before me, that they were moving to the law of music;[2] and, in fact, several times I fancied for a moment that I heard a few wondrous tones coming I knew not whence. But they did not last long enough to convince me that I had heard them with the bodily sense. Such as they were, however, they took strange liberties with me, causing me to burst suddenly into tears, of which there was no presence to make me ashamed, or casting me into a kind of trance of speechless delight, which, passing as suddenly, left me faint and longing for more.

Now, on an evening, before I had been a week in the palace, I was wandering through one lighted arcade[3] and corridor after another. At length I arrived, through a door that closed behind me, in another vast hall of the palace. It was filled with a subdued crimson light; by which I saw that slender pillars of black, built close to walls of white marble, rose to a great height, and then, dividing into innumerable divergent arches, supported a roof, like the walls, of white marble, upon which the arches intersected intricately, forming a fretting[4] of black upon the white, like the network of a skeleton-leaf. The floor was black. Between several pairs of the pillars upon every side, the place of the wall behind was occupied by a crimson curtain of thick silk, hanging in heavy and rich folds. Behind each of these curtains burned a powerful light, and these were the sources of the glow that filled the hall. A peculiar delicious odour pervaded the place. As soon as I entered, the old inspiration seemed to return to me, for I felt a strong impulse to sing; or rather, it seemed as if some one else was singing a song in my soul, which wanted to come forth at my lips, imbodied[5] in my breath. But I kept silence; and feeling somewhat overcome by the red light and the perfume, as well as by the emotion within me, and seeing at one end of the hall a great crimson chair, more like a throne than a chair, beside a table of white marble, I went to it, and, throwing myself in it, gave myself up to a succession of images of bewildering beauty, which passed before my inward eye, in a long and occasionally crowded train.[6] Here I sat for hours, I suppose; till, returning somewhat to myself, I saw that the red light had paled away, and felt a cool gentle breath gliding over my forehead. I rose and left the hall with unsteady steps, finding my way with some difficulty to my own chamber, and faintly remembering, as I went, that only in the marble cave, before I found the sleeping statue, had I ever had a similar experience.

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[1] William Shakespeare (1564-1616), *The Winter's Tale*, published in 1623 in the *First Folio.*

[2] Somewhat of an oxymoron since MacDonald begins *Phantastes* with a quotation by Novalis that suggests music is harmonious while being lawless, like the Aeolian harp.

[3] Vaulted place, open on one or both sides, supported by pillars.

[4] Covering of ornamental interlacing of jewels or flowers.

After this, I repaired every morning to the same hall; where I sometimes sat in the chair and dreamed deliciously, and sometimes walked up and down over the black floor. Sometimes I acted within myself a whole drama, during one of these perambulations;[7] sometimes walked deliberately through the whole epic of a tale; sometimes ventured to sing a song, though with a shrinking fear of I knew not what. I was astonished at the beauty of my own voice as it rang through the place, or rather crept undulating, like a serpent of sound,[8] along the walls and roof of this superb music-hall. Entrancing verses arose within me as of their own accord, chanting themselves to their own melodies, and requiring no addition of music to satisfy the inward sense. But, ever in the pauses of these, when the singing mood was upon me, I seemed to hear something like the distant sound of multitudes of dancers, and felt as if it was the unheard music,[9] moving their rhythmic motion, that within me blossomed in verse and song. I felt, too, that could I but see the dance, I should, from the harmony of complicated movements, not of the dancers in relation to each other merely, but of each dancer individually in the manifested plastic[10] power that moved the consenting harmonious form, understand the whole of the music on the billows of which they floated and swung.

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[5] Also *embodied*, or having a body, soul, or spirit.

[6] This scene, where a light burns behind each curtain, imbuing the hall with crimson light, echoes Plato's "Allegory of the Cave," where images are mere reflections of the ideal form.

[7] A walk around an area. To perambulate is to walk ceremoniously or officially, and it can also refer to the act of bestowing a blessing.

[8] To undulate is to rise and fall like the waves, similar to the movement of a snake or serpent.

At length, one night, suddenly, when this feeling of dancing came upon me, I bethought me of lifting one of the crimson curtains, and looking if, perchance, behind it there might not be hid some other mystery, which might at least remove a step further the bewilderment of the present one. Nor was I altogether disappointed. I walked to one of the magnificent draperies, lifted a corner, and peeped in. There, burned a great, crimson, globe-shaped light, high in the cubical centre of another hall, which might be larger or less than that in which I stood, for its dimensions were not easily perceived, seeing that floor and roof and walls were entirely of black marble. The roof was supported by the same arrangement of pillars radiating in arches, as that of the first hall; only, here, the pillars and arches were of dark red. But what absorbed my delighted gaze, was an innumerable assembly of white marble statues, of every form, and in multitudinous posture, filling the hall throughout. These stood, in the ruddy glow of the great lamp, upon pedestals of jet black. Around the lamp shone in golden letters, plainly legible from where I stood, the two words—

TOUCH NOT![11]

There was in all this, however, no solution to the sound of dancing; and now I was aware that the influence on my mind had ceased. I did not go in that evening, for I was weary and faint, but I hoarded up the expectation of entering, as of a great coming joy.

Next night I walked, as on the preceding, through the hall. My mind was filled with pictures and songs, and therewith so much absorbed, that I did not for some time think of looking within the curtain I had last night lifted. When the thought of doing so occurred to me first, I happened to be within a few yards of it. I became conscious at the same moment, that the sound of dancing had been for some time in my ears. I approached the curtain quickly, and, lifting it, entered the black hall. Everything was still as death. I should have concluded that the sound must have proceeded from some other more distant quarter, which conclusion its faintness would, in ordinary circumstances, have necessitated from the first; but there was a something about the statues that caused me still to remain in doubt. As I said, each stood perfectly still upon its black pedestal; but there was about every one a certain air, not of motion, but as if it had just ceased from movement; as if the rest were not altogether of the marbly stillness of thousands of years. It was as if the peculiar atmosphere of each had yet a kind of invisible tremulousness; as if its agitated wavelets had not yet subsided into a perfect calm. I had the suspicion that they had anticipated my appearance, and had sprung, each, from the living joy of the dance, to the death-silence and blackness of its isolated pedestal, just before I entered. I walked across the central hall to the curtain opposite the one I had lifted, and, entering there, found all the appearances similar; only that the statues were different, and differently grouped. Neither did they produce on my mind that impression—of motion just expired, which I had experienced from the others. I found that behind every one of the crimson curtains was a similar hall, similarly lighted, and similarly occupied.

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[9] MacDonald echoes John Keats, who wrote in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1819): "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard / Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on / Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd, / Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:"

[10] Having the ability to mold or shape.

[11] The prohibition is integral to fairy tales. "Sleeping Beauty," told not to touch the spindle, is one example. Anodos has difficulty following prohibitions: he desires to touch the fairy woman at the beginning of the story and he breaks the girl's globe because he desires to touch it too much.

The next night, I did not allow my thoughts to be absorbed as before with inward images, but crept stealthily along to the furthest curtain in the hall, from behind which, likewise, I had formerly seemed to hear the sound of dancing. I drew aside its edge as suddenly as I could, and, looking in, saw that the utmost stillness pervaded the vast place. I walked in, and passed through it to the other end. There I found that it communicated with a circular corridor, divided from it only by two rows of red columns. This corridor, which was black, with red niches holding statues, ran entirely about the statue-halls, forming a communication between the further ends of them all; further, that is, as regards the central hall of white, whence they all diverged like radii,[12] finding their circumference in the corridor. Round this corridor I now went, entering all the halls, of which there were twelve, and finding them all similarly constructed, but filled with quite various statues, of what seemed both ancient and modern sculpture. After I had simply walked through them, I found myself sufficiently tired to long for rest, and went to my own room.

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[12] Plural of radius, which is the distance from the center of a circle to its circumference, the outer edge of the circle.

In the night I dreamed that, walking close by one of the curtains, I was suddenly seized with the desire to enter, and darted in. This time I was too quick for them. All the statues were in motion, statues no longer, but men and women—all shapes of beauty that ever sprang from the brain of the sculptor, mingled in the convolutions of a complicated dance. Passing through them to the further end, I almost started from my sleep on beholding, not taking part in the dance with the others, nor seemingly endued with life like them, but standing in marble coldness and rigidity upon a black pedestal in the extreme left corner—my lady of the cave; the marble beauty who sprang from her tomb or her cradle at the call of my songs. While I gazed in speechless astonishment and admiration, a dark shadow, descending from above like the curtain of a stage, gradually hid her entirely from my view. I felt with a shudder that this shadow was perchance my missing demon, whom I had not seen for days. I awoke with a stifled cry.

Of course, the next evening I began my journey through the halls (for I knew not to which my dream had carried me), in the hope of proving the dream to be a true one, by discovering my marble beauty upon her black pedestal. At length, on reaching the tenth hall, I thought I recognised some of the forms I had seen dancing in my dream; and to my bewilderment, when I arrived at the extreme corner on the left, there stood, the only one I had yet seen, a vacant pedestal. It was exactly in the position occupied, in my dream, by the pedestal on which the white lady stood. Hope beat violently in my heart.

"Now," said I to myself, "if yet another part of the dream would but come true, and I should succeed in surprising these forms in their nightly dance; it might be the rest would follow, and I should see on the pedestal my marble queen. Then surely if my songs sufficed to give her life before, when she lay in the bonds of alabaster, much more would they be sufficient then to give her volition and motion, when she alone of assembled crowds of marble forms, would be standing rigid and cold."

But the difficulty was, to surprise the dancers. I had found that a premeditated attempt at surprise, though executed with the utmost care and rapidity, was of no avail. And, in my dream, it was effected by a sudden thought suddenly executed. I saw, therefore, that there was no plan of operation offering any probability of success, but this:

to allow my mind to be occupied with other thoughts, as I wandered around the great centre-hall; and so wait till the impulse to enter one of the others should happen to arise in me just at the moment when I was close to one of the crimson curtains. For I hoped that if I entered any one of the twelve halls at the right moment, that would as it were give me the right of entrance to all the others, seeing they all had communication behind. I would not diminish the hope of the right chance, by supposing it necessary that a desire to enter should awake within me, precisely when I was close to the curtains of the tenth hall.

At first, the impulses to see recurred so continually, in spite of the crowded imagery that kept passing through my mind, that they formed too nearly a continuous chain, for the hope that any one of them would succeed as a surprise. But as I persisted in banishing them, they recurred less and less often; and after two or three, at considerable intervals, had come when the spot where I happened to be was unsuitable, the hope strengthened, that soon one might arise just at the right moment; namely, when, in walking round the hall, I should be close to one of the curtains.

At length the right moment and the impulse coincided. I darted into the ninth hall.[13] It was full of the most exquisite moving forms. The whole space wavered and swam with the involutions of an intricate dance. It seemed to break suddenly as I entered, and all made one or two bounds towards their pedestals; but, apparently on finding that they were thoroughly overtaken, they returned to their employment (for it seemed with them earnest enough to be called such) without further heeding me. Somewhat impeded by the floating crowd, I made what haste I could towards the bottom of the hall; whence, entering the corridor, I turned towards the tenth. I soon arrived at the corner I wanted to reach, for the corridor was comparatively empty; but, although the dancers here, after a little confusion, altogether disregarded my presence, I was dismayed at beholding, even yet, a vacant pedestal. But I had a conviction that she was near me. And as I looked at the pedestal, I thought I saw upon it, vaguely revealed as if through overlapping folds of drapery, the indistinct outlines of white feet. Yet there was no sign of drapery or concealing shadow whatever. But I remembered the descending shadow in my dream.

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[13] The nine halls echo the nine levels of Hell in Dante's *Inferno* (1472). MacDonald was heavily influenced by Dante. C. S. Lewis has George MacDonald as his Virgilian guide in *The Great Divorce* (1945), which was a response to William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790-93). MacDonald was also influenced by Blake. See Appendix C.

And I hoped still in the power of my songs; thinking that what could dispel alabaster, might likewise be capable of dispelling what concealed my beauty now, even if it were the demon whose darkness had overshadowed all my life.

Chapter XV

> *Alexander.* When will you finish Campaspe?
> *Apelles.* Never finish: for always in absolute beauty there is somewhat above art.
>
> LYLY'S *Campaspe.*[1]

And now, what song should I sing to unveil my Isis,[2] if indeed she was present unseen? I hurried away to the white hall of Phantasy,[3] heedless of the innumerable forms of beauty that crowded my way: these might cross my eyes, but the unseen filled my brain. I wandered long, up and down the silent space: no songs came. My soul was not still enough for songs. Only in the silence and darkness of the soul's night, do those stars of the inward firmament sink to its lower surface from the singing realms beyond, and shine upon the conscious spirit. Here all effort was unavailing. If they came not, they could not be found.

Next night, it was just the same. I walked through the red glimmer of the silent hall; but lonely as there I walked, as lonely trod my soul up and down the halls of the brain. At last I entered one of the statue-halls. The dance had just commenced, and I was delighted to find that I was free of their assembly. I walked on till I came to the sacred corner. There I found the pedestal just as I had left it, with the faint glimmer as of white feet still resting on the dead black. As soon as I saw it, I seemed to feel a presence which longed to become visible; and, as it were, called to me to gift it with self-manifestation, that it might shine on me. The power of song came to me. But the moment my voice, though I sang low and soft, stirred the air of the hall, the dancers started; the quick interweaving crowd shook, lost its form, divided; each figure sprang to its pedestal, and stood, a self-evolving life no more, but a rigid, life-like, marble shape, with the whole form composed into the expression of a single state or act. Silence rolled like a spiritual thunder[4] through the grand space. My song had ceased, scared at its own influences. But I saw in the hand of one of the statues close by me, a harp whose chords yet quivered. I remembered that as she bounded past me, her harp had brushed against my arm; so the spell of the marble had not infolded it. I sprang to her, and with a gesture of entreaty, laid my hand on the harp. The marble hand, probably from its contact with the uncharmed harp, had strength enough to relax its hold, and yield the harp to me. No other motion indicated life.

---

[1] *Campaspe*, an Elizabethan play by John Lyly (1584). The lines quoted are from Act 3, Scene 4, and they indicate the notion of a Platonic beauty, an ideal beauty that the artist can never capture perfectly.

[2] Ancient Egyptian goddess of life and rebirth.

[3] Variant spelling of *fantasy*. *Phantasy* is not only an older spelling, but it is also the spelling most closely associated with psychology and psychoanalysis. This association is appropriate here because the "white hall of Phantasy" serves as a metaphor for the mind.

Instinctively I struck the chords and sang. And not to break upon the record of my song, I mention here, that as I sang the first four lines, the loveliest feet became clear upon the black pedestal; and ever as I sang, it was as if a veil were being lifted up from before the form, but an invisible veil, so that the statue appeared to grow before me, not so much by evolution, as by infinitesimal degrees of added height. And, while I sang, I did not feel that I stood by a statue, as indeed it appeared to be, but that a real woman-soul was revealing itself by successive stages of imbodiment, and consequent manifestation and expression.

Feet of beauty, firmly planting
  Arches white on rosy heel!
Whence the life-spring, throbbing, panting,
  Pulses upward to reveal!
Fairest things know least despising;
  Foot and earth meet tenderly:
'Tis the woman, resting, rising
  Upward to sublimity.

Rise the limbs, sedately sloping,
  Strong and gentle, full and free;
Soft and slow, like certain hoping,
  Drawing nigh the broad firm knee.
Up to speech! As up to roses
  Pants the life from leaf to flower,
So each blending change discloses,
  Nearer still, expression's power.

---

[4] "Silence rolled like a spiritual thunder" is another example of synesthesia, the mixing of senses, and here it combines with paradox (silent thunder). These rhetorical devices serve to communicate the incommunicable.

Lo! fair sweeps, white surges, twining
Up and outward fearlessly!
Temple columns, close combining,
Lift a holy mystery.
Heart of mine! what strange surprises
Mount aloft on such a stair!
Some great vision upward rises,
Curving, bending, floating fair.

Bands and sweeps, and hill and hollow
Lead my fascinated eye;
Some apocalypse will follow,
Some new world of deity.
Zoned unseen, and outward swelling,
With new thoughts and wonders rife,
Queenly majesty foretelling,
See the expanding house of life!

Sudden heaving, unforbidden
Sighs eternal, still the same—
Mounts of snow have summits hidden
In the mists of uttered flame.
But the spirit, dawning nearly
Finds no speech for earnest pain;
Finds a soundless sighing merely—
Builds its stairs, and mounts again.

Heart, the queen, with secret hoping,
Sendeth out her waiting pair;
Hands, blind hands, half blindly groping,
Half inclasping visions rare;
And the great arms, heartways bending;
Might of Beauty, drawing home;
There returning, and re-blending,
Where from roots of love they roam.

Build thy slopes of radiance beamy,
Spirit, fair with womanhood!
Tower thy precipice, white-gleamy,
Climb unto the hour of good.
Dumb space will be rent asunder,
Now the shining column stands

Ready to be crowned with wonder
  By the builder's joyous hands.

All the lines abroad are spreading,
  Like a fountain's falling race.
Airy foot to rest the face!
  Speech is nigh; oh, see the blushing
Sweet approach of lip and breath!
Round the mouth dim silence, hushing,
  Waits to die ecstatic death.

Span across in treble curving,
  Bow of promise, upper lip!
Set them free, with gracious swerving;
  Let the wing-words float and dip.
Dumb art thou? O Love immortal,
  More than words thy speech must be;
Childless yet the tender portal
  Of the home of melody.

Now the nostrils open fearless,
  Proud in calm unconsciousness.
Sure it must be something peerless
  That the great Pan[5] would express!
Deepens, crowds some meaning tender,
  In the pure, dear lady-face.
Lo, a blinding burst of splendour!—
  'Tis the free soul's issuing grace.

Two calm lakes of molten glory
  Circling round unfathomed deeps!
Lightning-flashes, transitory,
  Cross the gulfs where darkness sleeps.
This the gate, at last, of gladness,
  To the outward-striving *me*:
In a rain of light and sadness,
  Out its loves and longings flee!

---

[5] Greek mythological god of the wild, shepherds, and rustic music. Pan was associated with the nymphs and is often depicted as an ithyphallic god, a god associated with sexuality. He has the legs and horns of a goat. His presence in Anodos's poem reflects the erotic nature of Anodos's interest in this woman.

With a presence I am smitten
   Dumb, with a foreknown surprise;
Presence greater yet than written
   Even in the glorious eyes.
Through the gulfs, with inward gazes,
   I may look till I am lost;
Wandering deep in spirit-mazes,
   In a sea without a coast.

Windows open to the glorious!
   Time and space, oh, far beyond!
Woman, ah! thou art victorious,
   And I perish, overfond.
Springs aloft the yet Unspoken
   In the forehead's endless grace,
Full of silences unbroken;
   Infinite, unfeatured face.

Domes above, the mount of wonder;
   Height and hollow wrapt in night;
Hiding in its caverns under
   Woman-nations in their might.
Passing forms, the highest Human
   Faints away to the Divine:
Features none, of man or woman,
   Can unveil the holiest shine.

Sideways, grooved porches only
   Visible to passing eye,
Stand the silent, doorless, lonely
   Entrance-gates of melody.
But all sounds fly in as boldly,
   Groan and song, and kiss and cry
At their galleries, lifted coldly,
   Darkly, 'twixt the earth and sky.

Beauty, thou art spent, thou knowest:
   So, in faint, half-glad despair,
From the summit thou o'erflowest
   In a fall of torrent hair;[6]

---

[6] The poem ends with a description of the woman's long hair cascading down her body and serving as a veil to but partially conceal her naked beauty. Anodos's song

Hiding what thou hast created
   In a half-transparent shroud:
Thus, with glory soft-abated,
   Shines the moon through vapoury cloud.[7]

---

acts both as a creative force and a strip tease. It is remarkable in its erotic intensity. At the end, like Pygmalion's creation, the woman stands before Anodos naked and alluring.

[7] "Vapoury cloud" is a phrase that appears in the poem "The Dreaming Voyager" published in 1825 in the journal *The Congregational Magazine*. Anodos is a fellow dreaming voyager. The editor of the journal was Greville Ewing, the grandfather of Greville Ewing Matheson, a close friend of MacDonald. Chapter 12 of *Phantastes* begins with a poem attributed to G. E. M.

Chapter XVI

Selbst der Styx, der neunfach sie umwindet,
  Wehrt die Rückkehr Ceres Tochter nicht;
Nach dem Apfel greift sie, und es bindet
  Ewig sie des Orkus Pflicht.
SCHILLER.—*Das Ideal und das Leben*[1]

Ev'n the Styx, which ninefold her infoldeth
  Hems not Ceres' daughter in its flow;
But she grasps the apple—ever holdeth
  Her, sad Orcus, down below.

Ever as I sang, the veil was uplifted; ever as I sang, the signs of life grew; till, when the eyes dawned upon me, it was with that sunrise of splendour which my feeble song attempted to re-imbody. The wonder is, that I was not altogether overcome, but was able to complete my song as the unseen veil continued to rise. This ability came solely from the state of mental elevation in which I found myself. Only because uplifted in song, was I able to endure the blaze of the dawn. But I cannot tell whether she looked more of statue or more of woman; she seemed removed into that region of phantasy where all is intensely vivid, but nothing clearly defined. At last, as I sang of her descending hair, the glow of soul faded away, like a dying sunset. A lamp within had been extinguished, and the house of life shone blank in a winter morn. She was a statue once more––but visible, and that was much gained. Yet the revulsion from hope and fruition was such, that, unable to restrain myself, I sprang to her, and, in defiance of the law of the place, flung my arms around her, as if I would tear her from the grasp of a visible Death,[2] and lifted her from the pedestal down to my heart. But no sooner had her feet ceased to be in contact with the black pedestal, than she shuddered and trembled all over; then, writhing from my arms, before I could tighten their hold, she sprang into the corridor, with the reproachful cry, "You should not have touched me!" darted behind one of the exterior pillars of the circle, and disappeared. I followed almost as fast; but ere I could reach the pillar, the sound of a closing door, the saddest of all sounds sometimes, fell on my ear; and, arriving at the spot where she had vanished, I saw, lighted by a pale yellow lamp which hung above it, a heavy, rough door, altogether unlike any others I had seen in the palace; for they were all of ebony, or ivory, or covered with silver-plates, or of some odorous wood, and very ornate; whereas this seemed of old oak, with heavy nails and iron studs. Notwithstanding the precipitation of my pursuit, I could not help reading, in silver letters beneath the lamp: *"No one enters here without leave of the Queen."*[3] But what was the Queen to me, when I followed my white lady? I dashed the door to the wall, and sprang through. Lo! I stood on a waste windy hill. Great stones like tombstones stood all about me. No door, no palace was to be seen. A white figure gleamed past me, wringing her hands, and crying, "Ah! you should have sung to me; you should have sung to me!" and disappeared behind one of the stones. I followed. A cold gust of wind met me from behind the stone; and when I looked, I saw nothing but a great hole in the earth, into which I could find no way of entering. Had she fallen in? I could not tell. I must wait for the daylight. I sat down and wept, for there was no help.

---

[1] Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805) was a German writer, primarily known as a dramatist, poet, and literary critic. *Das Ideal und das Leben* (*Life and the Ideal*, 1795) is a philosophical poem. The *Oxford Reference* reports that the poem was "first published in 1795 in No. 9 of *Die Horen*, with the title 'Das Reich der Schatten'. Schiller changed this in 1800 to 'Das Reich der Formen', and adopted the present title in 1804." Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873), writer and politician, translated the poem in 1844 as *Ideal and Actual Life*. Bulwer-Lytton began his novel *Paul Clifford* (1830) with the lines: "It was a dark and stormy night," which is the name of the annual conference for bad opening lines for imaginary novels. Madeleine L'Engle, who was inspired by MacDonald, begins her 1962 fantasy *A Wrinkle in Time* with these words, as does Snoopy when he plays the World Famous Author in the comic strip *Peanuts*.

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[2] Clearly, Anodos has not learned from the "Touch Not" prohibition from chapter 14 and chapter 1.

[3] Anodos violates the law of the Queen, further suggesting his inability to quell his desire for the white lady. Lewis Carroll parodies the law of the Queen, and by association Queen Victoria, by creating the Queen of Hearts in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and the Red Queen in *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871). Carroll had MacDonald read a version of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* to his children, and the white rabbit in *Phantastes* is clearly an influence on *Wonderland.*

Chapter XVII

Anfangs wollt 'ich fast verzagen,
  Und ich glaubt' ich trüg' es nie,
Und ich hab' es doch getragen,—
  Aber fragt mich nur nicht: wie?
HEINE.[1]

First, I thought, almost despairing,
  This must crush my spirit now;
Yet I bore it, and am bearing—
  Only do not ask me how.

When the daylight came, it brought the possibility of action, but with it little of consolation. With the first visible increase of light, I gazed into the chasm, but could not, for more than an hour, see sufficiently well to discover its nature. At last I saw it was almost a perpendicular opening, like a roughly excavated well, only very large. I could perceive no bottom; and it was not till the sun actually rose, that I discovered a sort of natural staircase, in many parts little more than suggested, which led round and round the gulf, descending spirally into its abyss. I saw at once that this was my path; and without a moment's hesitation, glad to quit the sunlight, which stared at me most heartlessly, I commenced my tortuous descent. It was very difficult. In some parts I had to cling to the rocks like a bat. In one place, I dropped from the track down upon the next returning spire of the stair; which being broad in this particular portion, and standing out from the wall at right angles, received me upon my feet safe, though somewhat stupefied by the shock. After descending a great way, I found the stair ended at a narrow opening which entered the rock horizontally. Into this I crept, and, having entered, had just room to turn round. I put my head out into the shaft by which I had come down, and surveyed the course of my descent. Looking up, I saw the stars; although the sun must by this time have been high in the heavens. Looking below, I saw that the sides of the shaft went sheer down, smooth as glass; and far beneath me, I saw the reflection of the same stars I had seen in the heavens when I looked up. I turned again, and crept inwards some distance, when the passage widened, and I was at length able to stand and walk upright. Wider and loftier grew the way; new paths branched off on every side; great open halls appeared; till at last I found myself wandering on through an underground country, in which the sky was of rock, and instead of trees and flowers, there were only fantastic rocks and stones. And ever as I went, darker grew my thoughts, till at last I had no hope whatever of finding the white lady: I no longer called her to myself *my* white lady. Whenever a choice was necessary, I always chose the path which seemed to lead downwards.

---

[1] Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) was a German poet whose poetry has a strong political focus. MacDonald includes several translations from Heine in *Exotics* (pp. 154-165), his book of translations from German and Italian poets (1876). The poems he includes resonate nicely with *Phantastes*. See Appendix C.

At length I began to find that these regions were inhabited. From behind a rock a peal of harsh grating laughter, full of evil humour, rang through my ears, and, looking round, I saw a queer, goblin creature, with a great head and ridiculous features, just such as those described, in German histories and travels, as Kobolds.[2] "What do you want with me?" I said. He pointed at me with a long forefinger, very thick at the root, and sharpened to a point, and answered, "He! he! he! what do *you* want here?" Then, changing his tone, he continued, with mock humility—"Honoured sir, vouchsafe to withdraw from thy slaves the lustre of thy august presence, for thy slaves cannot support its brightness."[3] A second appeared, and struck in: "You are so big, you keep the sun from us. We can't see for you, and we're so cold." Thereupon arose, on all sides, the most terrific uproar of laughter, from voices like those of children in volume, but scrannel[4] and harsh as those of decrepit age, though, unfortunately, without its weakness. The whole pandemonium of fairy devils,[5] of all varieties of fantastic ugliness, both in form and feature, and of all sizes from one to four feet, seemed to have suddenly assembled about me. At length, after a great babble of talk among themselves, in a language unknown to me, and after seemingly endless gesticulation, consultation, elbow-nudging, and unmitigated peals of laughter, they formed into a circle about one of their number, who scrambled upon a stone, and, much to my surprise, and somewhat to my dismay, began to sing, in a voice corresponding in its nature to his talking one, from beginning to end, the song with which I had brought the light into the eyes of the white lady. He sang the same air too; and, all the time, maintained a face of mock entreaty and worship; accompanying the song with the travestied gestures[6] of one playing on the lute. The whole assembly kept silence, except at the close of every verse, when they roared, and danced, and shouted with laughter, and flung themselves on the ground, in real or pretended convulsions of delight. When he had finished, the singer threw himself from the top of the stone, turning heels over head several times in his descent; and when he did alight, it was on the top of his head, on which he hopped about, making the most grotesque gesticulations with his legs in the air. Inexpressible laughter followed, which broke up in a shower of tiny stones from innumerable hands. They could not materially injure me, although they cut me on the head and face. I attempted to run away, but they all rushed upon me, and, laying hold of every part that afforded a grasp, held me tight. Crowding about me like bees, they shouted an insect-swarm of exasperating speeches up into my face, among which the most frequently recurring were—"You shan't have her; you shan't have her; he! he! he! She's for a better man; she's for a better man; how he'll kiss her! how he'll kiss her!"

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[2] In German mythology kobolds are sprites or goblins. Some inhabit houses and do domestic chores, others live on ships and aid sailors, and still others live underground. This last group, underground kobolds, or goblins, are what MacDonald references. These creatures appear again in MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872). Anodos refers to these creatures as "queer," meaning strange and peculiar. "Queer" is a word often used in nineteenth-century literature to indicate something that is confusing and mixed up. MacDonald would have read about underground places like the one he describes here in E. T. A. Hoffmann's "The Mines of Falun" (1819), Ludwig Tieck's "The Runenberg" (1804), and Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1800).

[3] The Kobold speaks in a formal and archaic manner to flout or to ridicule Anodos. "Vouchsafe" is a condescending way of saying "please grant this request." "Lustre" is light, in this case bright light.

[4] Thin or meager. The voices are grating but not loud.

[5] Kobolds, like goblins, are fairy creatures, inhabitants of Fairy Land. They are malevolent, devilish, and their laughter and chatter create a pandemonium ("all the demons" in Greek), a wild and disorderly confusion of sound. In John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (first version 1667), Pandemonium is the capital of Hell.

The galvanic torrent of this battery of malevolence[7] stung to life within me a spark of nobleness, and I said aloud, "Well, if he is a better man, let him have her."

They instantly let go their hold of me, and fell back a step or two, with a whole broadside of grunts and humphs, as of unexpected and disappointed approbation. I made a step or two forward, and a lane was instantly opened for me through the midst of the grinning little antics,[8] who bowed most politely to me on every side as I passed. After I had gone a few yards, I looked back, and saw them all standing quite still, looking after me, like a great school of boys; till suddenly one turned round, and with a loud whoop, rushed into the midst of the others. In an instant, the whole was one writhing and tumbling heap of contortion, reminding me of the live pyramids of intertwined snakes of which travellers make report. As soon as one was worked out of the mass, he bounded off a few paces, and then, with a somerset and a run, threw himself gyrating into the air, and descended with all his weight on the summit of the heaving and struggling chaos of fantastic figures. I left them still busy at this fierce and apparently aimless amusement. And as I went, I sang—

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[6] Distorted gestures here mimicking the playing of a lute (stringed instrument).

[7] "Galvanic" here means shocking or startling. The word relates to electricity and hence the following "battery." "Battery" here refers to repeated blows and also a source of malevolent energy.

If a nobler waits for thee,
  I will weep aside;
It is well that thou should'st be,
  Of the nobler, bride.

For if love builds up the home,
  Where the heart is free,
Homeless yet the heart must roam,
  That has not found thee.

One must suffer: I, for her,
  Yield in her my part.
Take her, thou art worthier—

  Still! be still, my heart!
Gift ungotten! largess high
  Of a frustrate will!
But to yield it lovingly
  Is a something still.

Then a little song arose of itself in my soul; and I felt for the moment, while it sank sadly within me, as if I was once more walking up and down the white hall of Phantasy in the Fairy Palace. But this lasted no longer than the song, as will be seen.

Do not vex thy violet
  Perfume to afford;
Else no odour thou wilt get

---

[8] "Antics" refers to grotesque players in medieval carnival. These grotesque figures are often depicted grinning (cf. gargoyles). Here MacDonald offers a metonymy by replacing the goblins with a word that suggests their behavior. Antic behavior is childishly wacky behavior.

From its little hoard.

In thy lady's gracious eyes
Look not thou too long;
Else from them the glory flies,
And thou dost her wrong.

Come not thou too near the maid,
Clasp her not too wild;
Else the splendour is allayed,
And thy heart beguiled.[9]

A crash of laughter, more discordant and deriding than any I had yet heard, invaded my ears. Looking on in the direction of the sound, I saw a little elderly woman, much taller, however, than the goblins I had just left, seated upon a stone by the side of the path. She rose, as I drew near, and came forward to meet me. She was very plain and commonplace in appearance, without being hideously ugly. Looking up in my face with a stupid sneer, she said: "Isn't it a pity you haven't a pretty girl to walk all alone with you through this sweet country? How different everything would look! wouldn't it? Strange that one can never have what one would like best! How the roses would bloom and all that, even in this infernal hole! wouldn't they, Anodos? Her eyes would light up the old cave, wouldn't they?"

"That depends on who the pretty girl should be," replied I.

"Not so very much matter that," she answered; "look here."

I had turned to go away as I gave my reply, but now I stopped and looked at her. As a rough unsightly bud might suddenly blossom into the most lovely flower; or rather, as a sunbeam bursts through a shapeless cloud, and transfigures the earth; so burst a face of resplendent beauty, as it were *through* the unsightly visage of the woman, destroying it with light as it dawned through it. A summer sky rose above me, grey with heat; across a shining slumberous landscape, looked from afar the peaks of snow-capped mountains; and down from a great rock beside me, fell a sheet of water mad with its own delight.

"Stay with me," she said, lifting up her exquisite face, and looking full in mine.

I drew back. Again the infernal laugh grated upon my ears; again the rocks closed in around me, and the ugly woman looked at me with wicked, mocking hazel eyes.

---

[9] This poem is a warning against an overly passionate response to another. Anodos's ardour can beguile or deceive him.

"You shall have your reward," said she. "You shall see your white lady again."

"That lies not with you," I replied, and turned and left her.

She followed me with shriek upon shriek of laughter, as I went on my way.

I may mention here, that although there was always light enough to see my path and a few yards on every side of me, I never could find out the source of this sad sepulchral illumination.

Chapter XVIII.

Im Sausen des Windes, im Brausen des Meers,
Und im Seufzen der eigenen Brust.
HEINE.[1]

In the wind's uproar, the sea's raging grim,
And the sighs that are born in him.

Ja, est wird zwar ein anderes Zeitalter kommen wo es Licht wird, und wo der Mensch aus erhabnen Traümen erwacht, und die Traüme—wieder findet, weil er nichts verlor als den Schlaf.

JEAN PAUL.—*Hesperus.*[2]

From dreams of bliss shall men awake
  One day, but not to weep:
The dreams remain; they only break
  The mirror of the sleep.

How I got through this dreary part of my travels, I do not know. I do not think I was upheld by the hope that any moment the light might break in upon me; for I scarcely thought about that. I went on with a dull endurance, varied by moments of uncontrollable sadness; for more and more the conviction grew upon me that I should never see the white lady again. It may seem strange that one with whom I had held so little communion, should have so engrossed my thoughts; but benefits conferred awaken love in some minds, as surely as benefits received in others. Besides being delighted and proud that *my* songs had called the beautiful creature to life, the same fact caused me to feel a tenderness unspeakable for her, accompanied with a kind of feeling of property in her; for so the goblin Selfishness would reward the angel Love.[3] When to all this is added, an overpowering sense of her beauty, and an unquestioning conviction that this was a true index to inward loveliness, it may be understood how it came to pass that my imagination filled my whole soul with the play of its own multitudinous colours and harmonies around the form which yet stood, a gracious marble radiance, in the midst of *its* white hall of phantasy. The time passed by unheeded; for my thoughts were busy. Perhaps this was also in part the cause of my needing no food,[4] and never thinking how I should find any, during this subterraneous part of my travels. How long they endured I could not tell, for I had no means of measuring time; and when I looked back, there was such a discrepancy between the decisions of my imagination and my judgment, as to the length of time that had passed, that I was bewildered, and gave up all attempts to arrive at any conclusion on the point.

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[1] Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) was a German poet and literary critic. See note 1, chapter 17.

[2] Jean Paul—Johann Paul Friedrich Richter (1763-1825)—was a German writer in the Romantic tradition, also known for his humorous writing. *Hesperus* (1795) includes two major ideas that MacDonald explores throughout *Phantastes*: the notion of dreams, and the importance of mirrors.

[3] MacDonald allegorizes "Selfishness" and "Love." Yet MacDonald complains about the *Athenæum* review of *Phantastes* in 1858, writing in a letter to Mrs. A. J. Scott: "I don't see what right the *Athenæum* has to call it an allegory and judge or

A grey mist continually gathered behind me. When I looked back towards the past, this mist was the medium through which my eyes had to strain for a vision of what had gone by; and the form of the white lady had receded into an unknown region. At length the country of rock began to close again around me, gradually and slowly narrowing, till I found myself walking in a gallery of rock once more, both sides of which I could touch with my outstretched hands. It narrowed yet, until I was forced to move carefully, in order to avoid striking against the projecting pieces of rock. The roof sank lower and lower, until I was compelled, first to stoop, and then to creep on my hands and knees. It recalled terrible dreams of childhood; but I was not much afraid, because I felt sure that this was my path, and my only hope of leaving Fairy Land, of which I was now almost weary.

At length, on getting past an abrupt turn in the passage, through which I had to force myself, I saw, a few yards ahead of me, the long-forgotten daylight shining through a small opening, to which the path, if path it could now be called, led me. With great difficulty I accomplished these last few yards, and came forth to the day. I stood on the shore of a sea, with a wintry sun just a few feet above its horizon-edge. It was bare, and waste, and grey.[5] Hundreds of hopeless

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misjudge it accordingly—as if nothing but an allegory could have two meanings!" (Greville MacDonald, *George MacDonald and His Wife*, 1924).

[4] Food plays an important role in fairy tales, usually to demonstrate the threat of hunger ("Hansel and Gretel"), to be a temptation ("Sleeping Beauty"), or to symbolize evil by cannibalism ("Jack the Giant-Killer"). That MacDonald has Anodos not requiring food inverts this dependency on food found in many fairy tales.

[5] Arthur Hughes illustrates this scene for the 1905 edition, titling the illustration,

waves rushed constantly shorewards,[6] falling exhausted upon a beach of great loose stones, that seemed to stretch miles and miles in both directions. There was nothing for the eye but mingling shades of grey; nothing for the ear but the rush of the coming, the roar of the breaking, and the moan of the retreating wave. No rock lifted up a sheltering severity above the dreariness around; even that from which I had myself emerged rose scarcely a foot above the opening by which I had reached the dismal day, more dismal even than the tomb I had left. A cold, death-like wind swept across the shore, seeming to issue from a pale mouth of cloud upon the horizon. Sign of life was nowhere visible. I wandered over the stones, up and down the beach, a human embodiment of the nature around me. The wind increased; its keen waves flowed through my soul; the foam rushed higher up the stones; a few dead stars began to gleam in the east; the sound of the waves grew louder and yet more despairing. A dark curtain of cloud was lifted up, and a pale blue rent shone between its foot and the edge of the sea, out from which rushed an icy storm of frozen wind, that tore the waters into spray as it passed, and flung the billows in raving heaps upon the desolate shore. I could bear it no longer.

"I will not be tortured to death," I cried; "I will meet it half-way. The life within me is yet enough to bear me up to the face of Death, and then I die unconquered."[7]

Before it had grown so dark, I had observed, though without any particular interest, that on one part of the shore a low platform of rock seemed to run out far into the midst of the breaking waters. Towards this I now went, scrambling over smooth stones, to which scarce even a particle of sea-weed clung; and having found it, I got on it, and followed its direction, as near as I could guess, out into the tumbling chaos. I could hardly keep my feet against the wind and sea. The waves repeatedly all but swept me off my path; but I kept on my

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"A wintry sea, bare, and waste, and gray." This wasteland imagery taps into the myth of the Fisher King, where fertility can only be restored when the ailing king dies and renews the world. The story of Christ is a form of the Fisher King myth. T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) helped usher in the modernist movement in poetry. Interesting fact: Eliot owned MacDonald's anthology *England's Antiphon* (1868). See Hughes's illustration in Appendix E.

[6] Toward the shore. Tennyson uses this word in his poem "The Lotos-Eaters" (1832) as did Robert Louis Stevenson in *Treasure Island* (1883).

[7] To contemplate death while encountering the great desolation or terror of nature is part of the sublime in literature. Lord Byron in *Manfred* (1817) defines the Byronic hero, who defies convention and has an abundance of romantic ennui. In this scene Anodos is a Byronic hero.

way, till I reached the end of the low promontory,[8] which, in the fall of the waves, rose a good many feet above the surface, and, in their rise, was covered with their waters. I stood one moment and gazed into the heaving abyss beneath me; then plunged headlong into the mounting wave below.[9] A blessing, like the kiss of a mother, seemed to alight on my soul; a calm, deeper than that which accompanies a hope deferred, bathed my spirit. I sank far into the waters, and sought not to return. I felt as if once more the great arms of the beech-tree were around me, soothing me after the miseries I had passed through, and telling me, like a little sick child, that I should be better to-morrow. The waters of themselves lifted me, as with loving arms, to the surface. I breathed again, but did not unclose my eyes. I would not look on the wintry sea, and the pitiless grey sky. Thus I floated, till something gently touched me. It was a little boat floating beside me. How it came there I could not tell; but it rose and sank on the waters, and kept touching me in its fall, as if with a human will to let me know that help was by me. It was a little gay-coloured boat, seemingly covered with glistering scales like those of a fish, all of brilliant rainbow hues. I scrambled into it, and lay down in the bottom, with a sense of exquisite repose. Then I drew over me a rich, heavy, purple cloth that was beside me; and, lying still, knew, by the sound of the waters, that my little bark was fleeting rapidly onwards. Finding, however, none of that stormy motion which the sea had manifested when I beheld it from the shore, I opened my eyes; and, looking first up, saw above me the deep violet sky of a warm southern night; and then, lifting my head, saw that I was sailing fast upon a summer sea, in the last border of a southern twilight. The aureole of the sun[10] yet shot the extreme faint tips of its longest rays above the horizon-waves, and withdrew them not. It was a perpetual twilight. The stars, great and earnest, like children's eyes, bent down lovingly towards the waters; and the reflected stars within seemed to float up, as if longing to meet their embraces. But when I looked down, a new wonder met my view. For, vaguely revealed beneath the wave, I floated above my whole Past. The fields of my childhood flitted by; the halls of my youthful labours; the streets of great cities where I had dwelt; and the assemblies of men and women wherein I had wearied myself seeking for rest. But so indistinct were the visions, that sometimes I thought I was sailing on a shallow sea, and that strange rocks and forests of sea-plants beguiled my eye, sufficiently to be transformed, by the magic of the phantasy, into well-known objects and regions. Yet, at times, a beloved form seemed to lie close beneath me in sleep; and the eyelids would tremble as if about to forsake the conscious eye; and the arms would heave upwards, as if in dreams they sought for a satisfying presence. But these motions might come only from the heaving of the waters between those forms and me. Soon I fell asleep, overcome with fatigue and delight. In dreams of unspeakable joy—of restored friendships; of revived embraces; of love which said it had never died; of faces that had vanished long ago, yet said with smiling lips that they knew nothing of the grave; of pardons implored, and granted with such bursting floods of love, that I was almost glad I had sinned—thus I passed through this wondrous twilight. I awoke with the feeling that I had been kissed and loved to my heart's content;[11] and found that my boat was floating motionless by the grassy shore of a little island.

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[8] Cliff or elevated piece of land that overhangs an ocean or other body of water.

[9] Death is a central concern in MacDonald, seen as more life. In this case, however, Anodos attempts to kill himself, which in MacDonald's world defies the sanctity of death as life, where death is something that must be earned after a journey through life. MacDonald's most sustained treatment of death in his fantasy works can be found in "The Golden Key" (1867) and *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871).

[10] Gold disc surrounding a head, a celestial crown. Dante Gabriel Rossetti used the aureole in many of his Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (founded in 1848) paintings. Arthur Hughes, the illustrator for many of MacDonald fairy tales, had a loose connection to the PRB. Rossetti's painting *Lady Lilith* (1866-68; 1872-73) and accompanying poem may have been an influence for MacDonald's last fantasy novel *Lilith* (1895).

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[11] Anodos's floating above and recollecting his past is reminiscent of Scrooge's journey with the three spirits to his redemption in Charles Dickens's "A Christmas Carol" (1843).

Chapter XIX

In stiller Ruhe, in wechselloser Einfalt führ ich unnunterbrochen das Bewusstseyn der ganzen Menschleit in mir.
SCHLEIERMACHER—*Monologen*.[1]

In still rest, in changeless simplicity, I bear, uninterrupted, the consciousness of the whole of Humanity within me.

—such a sweetness, such a grace,
In all thy speech appear,
That what to th'eye a beauteous face,
That thy tongue is to the ear.
COWLEY.[2]

The water was deep to the very edge; and I sprang from the little boat upon a soft grassy turf. The island seemed rich with a profusion of all grasses and low flowers. All delicate lowly things were most plentiful; but no trees rose skywards; not even a bush overtopped the tall grasses, except in one place near the cottage I am about to describe, where a few plants of the gum-cistus,[3] which drops every night all the blossoms that the day brings forth, formed a kind of natural arbour. The whole island lay open to the sky and sea. It rose nowhere more than a few feet above the level of the waters, which flowed deep all around its border. Here there seemed to be neither tide nor storm. A sense of persistent calm and fulness arose in the mind at the sight of the slow, pulse-like rise and fall of the deep, clear, unrippled waters against the bank of the island, for shore it could hardly be called, being so much more like the edge of a full, solemn river. As I walked over the grass towards the cottage, which stood at a little distance from the bank, all the flowers of childhood looked at me with perfect child-eyes out of the grass. My heart, softened by the dreams through which it had passed, overflowed in a sad, tender love towards them. They looked to me like children impregnably fortified in a helpless confidence. The sun stood half way down the western sky, shining very soft and golden; and there grew a second world of shadows amidst the world of grasses and wild flowers.

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[1] Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768-1834) was a German theologian and philosopher associated with the Higher Criticism of the Bible, or Historical Criticism. The attempt was to place Biblical texts in the context of their historical origins. He was also a proponent of Universalism, the belief that Hell and damnation are not eternal states. The *Monologen* (*Soliloquies* or *Monologues*) appeared in 1800.

[2] Abraham Cowley (1618-1667) was an English poet whose work echoes the metaphysical wit of John Donne. The lines quoted are lines 5-8 of "The Innocent III" (1647).

[3] Perennial shrubs that grow on rocky surfaces.

The cottage was square, with low walls, and a high pyramidal roof thatched with long reeds, of which the withered blossoms hung over all the eaves. It is noticeable that most of the buildings I saw in Fairy Land were cottages. There was no path to a door, nor, indeed, was there any track worn by footsteps in the island. The cottage rose right out of the smooth turf. It had no windows that I could see; but there was a door in the centre of the side facing me, up to which I went. I knocked, and the sweetest voice I had ever heard said, "Come in." I entered. A bright fire was burning on a hearth in the centre of the earthern floor, and the smoke found its way out at an opening in the centre of the pyramidal roof. Over the fire hung a little pot, and over the pot bent a woman-face, the most wonderful, I thought, that I had ever beheld. For it was older than any countenance I had ever looked upon.[4] There was not a spot in which a wrinkle could lie, where a wrinkle lay not. And the skin was ancient and brown, like old parchment. The woman's form was tall and spare: and when she stood up to welcome me, I saw that she was straight as an arrow. Could that voice of sweetness have issued from those lips of age? Mild as they were, could they be the portals whence flowed such melody? But the moment I saw her eyes, I no longer wondered at her voice: they were absolutely young—those of a woman of five-and-twenty, large, and of a clear gray. Wrinkles had beset them all about; the eyelids themselves were old, and heavy, and worn; but the eyes were very incarnations of soft light. She held out her hand to me, and the voice of sweetness again greeted me, with the single word, "Welcome." She set an old wooden chair for me, near the fire, and went on with her cooking. A wondrous sense of refuge and repose came upon me. I felt like a boy who has got home from school, miles across the hills, through a heavy storm of wind and snow. Almost, as I gazed on her, I sprang from my seat to kiss those old lips. And when, having finished her cooking, she brought some of the dish she had prepared, and set it on a little table by me, covered with a snow-white cloth, I could not help laying my head on her bosom, and bursting into happy tears. She put her arms round me, saying, "Poor child; poor child!"

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[4] The Old Wise Woman is a figure who appears regularly in MacDonald's fantasies. See, for example, *The Wise Woman: A Parable* (1875). This woman is ageless, both old and young together. She combines the wisdom of age with the innocence and purity of youth.

As I continued to weep, she gently disengaged herself; and, taking a spoon, put some of the food (I did not know what it was) to my lips, entreating me most endearingly to swallow it. To please her, I made an effort, and succeeded. She went on feeding me like a baby, with one arm round me, till I looked up in her face and smiled: then she gave me the spoon, and told me to eat, for it would do me good. I obeyed her, and found myself wonderfully refreshed. Then she drew near the fire an old-fashioned couch that was in the cottage, and making me lie down upon it, sat at my feet, and began to sing. Amazing store of old ballads rippled from her lips, over the pebbles of ancient tunes; and the voice that sang was sweet as the voice of a tuneful maiden that singeth ever from very fulness of song. The songs were almost all sad, but with a sound of comfort. One I can faintly recall. It was something like this:

Sir Aglovaile[5] through the churchyard rode;
    Sing, All alone I lie:
Little recked he where'er he yode,[6]
    All alone, up in the sky.

Swerved his courser, and plunged with fear;
    All alone I lie:
His cry might have wakened the dead men near,
  All alone, up in the sky.

The very dead that lay at his feet,
Lapt in the mouldy winding-sheet.

But he curbed[7] him and spurred him, until he stood
Still in his place, like a horse of wood,

With nostrils uplift, and eyes wide and wan;
But the sweat in streams from his fetlocks[8] ran.

A ghost grew out of the shadowy air,

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[5] Sir Aglovaile, a variant spelling of Sir Aglovale, a Knight of King Arthur's Round Table and brother of Sir Percivale. The ballad is yet another warning to Anodos of what will come of his impetuosity and passion if he does not check these.

[6] Archaic word for *went* or *proceeded.*

[7] To restrain.

[8] The projection behind and above a horse's hoof.

And sat in the midst of her moony hair.

In her gleamy hair she sat and wept;
In the dreamful moon they lay and slept;

The shadows above, and the bodies below,
Lay and slept in the moonbeams slow.

And she sang, like the moan of an autumn wind
Over the stubble left behind:

> *Alas, how easily things go wrong!*
> *A sigh too much, or a kiss too long,*
> *And there follows a mist and a weeping rain,*
> *And life is never the same again.*
>
> *Alas, how hardly things go right!*
> ‘*Tis hard to watch on a summer night,*
> *For the sigh will come, and the kiss will stay,*
> *And the summer night is a winter day.*

"Oh, lovely ghost my heart is woe,
"To see thee weeping and wailing so.

"Oh, lovely ghost," said the fearless knight,
"Can the sword of a warrior set it right?

"Or prayer of bedesman,[9] praying mild,
"As a cup of water a feverish child,

"Soothe thee at last, in dreamless mood,
"To sleep the sleep a dead lady should?

"Thine eyes they fill me with longing sore,
"As if I had known thee for evermore.

"Oh, lovely ghost, I could leave the day,
"To sit with thee in the moon away,

"If thou wouldst trust me, and lay thy head
"To rest on a bosom that is not dead."

The lady sprang up with a strange ghost cry,
And she flung her white ghost-arms on high;

And she laughed a laugh that was not gay,
And it lengthened out till it died away;

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[9] Or beadsman ("a man of prayer") is generally an elderly man who prays for those on the bede-role. In Scotland, such persons were in the employ of the King and they prayed for his wellbeing.

And the dead beneath turned and moaned,
And the yew-trees[10] above they shuddered and groaned.

"Will he love me twice with a love that is vain?
"Will he kill the poor ghost yet again?

"I thought thou wert good; but I said, and wept:
"'Can I have dreamed who have not slept?'

"And I knew, alas! or ever I would,
"Whether I dreamed, or thou wert good.

"When my baby died, my brain grew wild.
"I awoke, and found I was with my child."

"If thou art the ghost of my Adelaide,[11]
"How is it? Thou wert but a village maid,

"And thou seemest an angel lady white,
"Though thin, and wan, and past delight."

The lady smiled a flickering smile,
And she pressed her temples hard the while:

"Thou seest that Death for a woman can
"Do more than knighthood for a man."

"But show me the child thou callest mine.
"Is she out to-night in the ghost's sunshine?"

"In St. Peter's Church[12] she is playing on,
"At hide-and-seek, with Apostle John.[13]

"When the moonbeams right through the window go,
"Where the twelve[14] are standing in glorious show,

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[10] The yew tree is the tree associated with death. In England, it often appears in Churchyards and graveyards. See Wordsworth's "Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree . . ." (1798).

[11] *Adelaide* means "noble-natured." In 1830, the German princess Adelaide married King William IV of England and was known as Good Queen Adelaide.

[12] St. Peter is one of the Twelve Apostles and the first pope. He is taken to be the founder of the Church of Rome. On the day of the crucifixion, Peter denied Jesus three times. His weakness may be the reason MacDonald invokes his name here; Anodos too exhibits weakness, but will later redeem himself.

[13] Like Peter, John is one of the Twelve Apostles. Biblical scholars attribute five books in the New Testament to him: The Gospel of John, three Epistles of John, and Revelation. Unlike Peter, John did not forsake Jesus at the hour of the crucifixion, remaining by the cross until the end.

[14] The twelve apostles depicted on the stained glass. Compare with chapter 8 of

"She says the rest of them do not stir,
"But one comes down to play with her.

"Then I can go where I list, and weep,
"For good St. John my child will keep."

"Thy beauty filleth the very air.
"Never saw I a woman so fair."

"Come, if thou darest, and sit by my side;
"But do not touch me, or woe will betide.

"Alas, I am weak: I well might know
"This gladness betokens some further woe.

"Yet come. It will come. I will bear it. I can.
"For thou lovest me yet—though but as a man."

The knight dismounted in earnest speed;
Away through the tombstones thundered the steed,

And fell by the outer wall, and died.
But the knight he kneeled by the lady's side;

Kneeled beside her in wondrous bliss,
Rapt in an everlasting kiss:

Though never his lips come the lady nigh,
And his eyes alone on her beauty lie.

All the night long, till the cock crew loud,
He kneeled by the lady, lapt in her shroud.

And what they said, I may not say:
Dead night was sweeter than living day.

How she made him so blissful glad
Who made her and found her so ghostly sad,

I may not tell; but it needs no touch
To make them blessed who love so much.

"Come every night, my ghost, to me;
"And one night I will come to thee.

"'Tis good to have a ghostly wife:
"She will not tremble at clang of strife;

MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871); this chapter contains a church with windows that depict the twelve apostles.

"She will only hearken, amid the din,
"Behind the door, if he cometh in."

And this is how Sir Aglovaile
Often walked in the moonlight pale.

And oft when the crescent but thinned the gloom,
Full orbed moonlight filled his room;

And through beneath his chamber door,
Fell a ghostly gleam on the outer floor;

And they that passed, in fear averred
That murmured words they often heard.

'Twas then that the eastern crescent shone
Through the chancel window,[15] and good St. John

Played with the ghost-child all the night,
And the mother was free till the morning light,

And sped through the dawning night, to stay
With Aglovaile till the break of day.

And their love was a rapture, lóne and high,
And dumb as the moon in the topmost sky.

One night Sir Aglovaile, weary, slept
And dreamed a dream wherein he wept.

A warrior he was, not often wept he,
But this night he wept full bitterly.

He woke—beside him the ghost-girl shone
Out of the dark: 'twas the eve of St. John.[16]

He had dreamed a dream of a still, dark wood,
Where the maiden of old beside him stood;

But a mist came down, and caught her away,
And he sought her in vain through the pathless day,

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[15] A feature of church architecture, the chancel is that area of the church that contains the altar and choir; it is at the east end of the nave or central aisle of a traditional Christian church.

[16] June 23. Traditionally, John the Baptist was born six months before Jesus (see Luke 1:36, 56–57), and the feast of John the Baptist is celebrated on June 24, six months prior to Christmas Eve. In Chapter 1 of *Phantastes*, we learn that Anodos's experience takes place on Midsummer Eve, a time that coincides with the Eve of St. John. See note 17, chapter 1.

Till he wept with the grief that can do no more,
And thought he had dreamt the dream before.

From bursting heart the weeping flowed on;
And lo! beside him the ghost-girl shone;

Shone like the light on a harbour's breast,
Over the sea of his dream's unrest;

Shone like the wondrous, nameless boon,[17]
That the heart seeks ever, night or noon:

Warnings forgotten, when needed most,
He clasped to his bosom the radiant ghost.

She wailed aloud, and faded, and sank.
With upturn'd white face, cold and blank,

In his arms lay the corpse of the maiden pale,
And she came no more to Sir Aglovaile.

Only a voice, when winds were wild,
Sobbed and wailed like a chidden[18] child.

Alas, how easily things go wrong!
A sigh too much, or a kiss too long,
And there follows a mist and a weeping rain,
And life is never the same again.

This was one of the simplest of her songs, which, perhaps, is the cause of my being able to remember it better than most of the others.

While she sung, I was in Elysium,[19] with the sense of a rich soul upholding, embracing, and overhanging mine, full of all plenty and bounty. I felt as if she could give me everything I wanted; as if I should never wish to leave her, but would be content to be sung to and fed by her, day after day, as years rolled by. At last I fell asleep while she sang.

When I awoke, I knew not whether it was night or day. The fire had sunk to a few red embers, which just gave light enough to show me the woman standing a few feet from me, with her back towards me, facing the door by which I had entered. She was weeping, but very gently and plentifully. The tears seemed to come freely from her heart. Thus she stood for a few minutes; then, slowly turning at right angles to her former position, she faced another of the four sides of the cottage. I now observed for the first time, that here was a door likewise; and that, indeed, there was one in the centre of every side of the cottage. When she looked towards this second door, her tears ceased to flow, but sighs took their place. She often closed her eyes as she stood; and every time she closed her eyes, a gentle sigh seemed to be born in her heart and to escape at her lips. But when her eyes were open, her sighs were deep and very sad, and shook her whole frame. Then she turned towards the third door, and a cry as of fear or suppressed pain broke from her; but she seemed to hearten herself against the dismay, and to front it steadily; for, although I often heard a slight cry and sometimes a moan, yet she never moved or bent her head, and I felt sure that her eyes never closed. Then she turned to the fourth door, and I saw her shudder, and then stand still as a statue; till at last she turned towards me and approached the fire. I saw that her face was white as death. But she gave one look upwards, and smiled the sweetest, most child-innocent smile; then heaped fresh wood on the fire, and, sitting down by the blaze, drew her wheel near her, and began to spin. While she spun, she murmured a low strange song, to which the hum of the wheel made a kind of infinite symphony.[20] At length, she paused in her spinning and singing, and glanced towards me, like a mother who looks whether or not her child gives signs of waking. She smiled when she saw that my eyes were open. I asked her whether it was day yet. She answered, "It is always day here, so long as I keep my fire burning."

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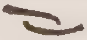
[17] Something that is helpful or beneficial.

[18] To chide is to scold or to rebuke; to chasten.

[19] From ancient Greece, where Elysium was the afterlife as blessed and happy, the opposite of Hades. In Elysium, a person enjoyed that which pleased him or her most in mortal life.

I felt wonderfully refreshed; and a great desire to see more of the island awoke within me. I rose, and saying that I wished to look about me, went towards the door by which I had entered.

"Stay a moment," said my hostess, with some trepidation in her voice. "Listen to me. You will not see what you expect when you go out of that door. Only remember this: whenever you wish to come back to me, enter wherever you see this mark."

She held up her left hand between me and the fire. Upon the palm, which appeared almost transparent, I saw, in dark red, a mark like this ,[21] which I took care to fix in my mind.

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[20] Compare with the spinning of the lady in the tower in *The Princess and the Goblin*. These elderly spinners, who create an "infinite symphony," are an inversion of the spinning old lady in "Sleeping Beauty."

[21] The mark represents an open circle. "The sign suggests embrace, but not enclosure," an idea relating to love that Anodos has yet to learn. See Roderick

She then kissed me, and bade me good-bye with a solemnity that awed me; and bewildered me too, seeing I was only going out for a little ramble in an island, which I did not believe larger than could easily be compassed in a few hours' walk at most. As I went she resumed her spinning.

I opened the door, and stepped out. The moment my foot touched the smooth sward, I seemed to issue from the door of an old barn on my father's estate, where, in the hot afternoons, I used to go and lie amongst the straw, and read. It seemed to me now that I had been asleep there. At a little distance in the field, I saw two of my brothers at play. The moment they caught sight of me, they called out to me to come and join them, which I did; and we played together as we had done years ago, till the red sun went down in the west, and the grey fog began to rise from the river. Then we went home together with a strange happiness. As we went, we heard the continually renewed larum of a landrail[22] in the long grass. One of my brothers and I separated to a little distance, and each commenced running towards the part whence the sound appeared to come, in the hope of approaching the spot where the bird was, and so getting at least a sight of it, if we should not be able to capture the little creature. My father's voice recalled us from trampling down the rich long grass, soon to be cut down and laid aside for winter. I had quite forgotten all about Fairy Land, and the wonderful old woman, and the curious red mark.

My favourite brother and I shared the same bed. Some childish dispute arose between us; and our last words, ere we fell asleep, were not of kindness, notwithstanding the pleasures of the day. When I woke in the morning, I missed him. He had risen early, and had gone to bathe in the river. In another hour, he was brought home drowned. Alas! alas! if we had only gone to sleep as usual, the one with his arm about the other! Amidst the horror of the moment, a strange conviction flashed across my mind, that I had gone through the very same once before.

I rushed out of the house, I knew not why, sobbing and crying bitterly. I ran through the fields in aimless distress, till, passing the old barn, I caught sight of a red mark on the door. The merest trifles

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McGillis, "The Community of the Centre: Structure and Theme in *Phantastes*," *For the Childlike*, 56.

[22] The alarm (larum) of a bird known as the landrail or corn crake. This is a medium-sized bird of brownish and black colour. This bird breeds in grasslands and hayfields, and so it is evident in the vicinity of farms. Anodos's arrival has caused the bird to sound the alarm.

sometimes rivet the attention in the deepest misery; the intellect has so little to do with grief. I went up to look at this mark, which I did not remember ever to have seen before. As I looked at it, I thought I would go in and lie down amongst the straw, for I was very weary with running about and weeping. I opened the door; and there in the cottage sat the old woman as I had left her, at her spinning-wheel.[23]

"I did not expect you quite so soon," she said, as I shut the door behind me. I went up to the couch, and threw myself on it with that fatigue wherewith one awakes from a feverish dream of hopeless grief.

The old woman sang:

The great sun, benighted,
  May faint from the sky;
But love, once uplighted,
  Will never more die.

Form, with its brightness,
  From eyes will depart:
It walketh, in whiteness,
  The halls of the heart.

Ere she had ceased singing, my courage had returned. I started from the couch, and, without taking leave of the old woman, opened the door of Sighs, and sprang into what should appear.

I stood in a lordly hall, where, by a blazing fire on the hearth, sat a lady, waiting, I knew, for some one long desired. A mirror was near me, but I saw that my form had no place within its depths, so I feared not that I should be seen. The lady wonderfully resembled my marble lady, but was altogether of the daughters of men, and I could not tell whether or not it was she. It was not for me she waited. The tramp of a great horse rang through the court without. It ceased, and the clang of armour told that his rider alighted, and the sound of his ringing heels approached the hall. The door opened; but the lady waited, for she would meet her lord alone. He strode in: she flew like a home-bound dove into his arms, and nestled on the hard steel. It was the knight of the soiled armour. But now the armour shone like polished glass; and, strange to tell, though the mirror reflected not my form, I saw a dim shadow of myself in the shining steel.

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[23] The spinning-wheel has a long history in fairy and folk tale and in mythology. It is associated with fortune and fate, and the spinning has to do with time and creation. The old lady at her wheel may represent time itself, and the fate that awaits everyone. In Greek mythology, the three fates, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, spin, dispense, and cut the thread of life. In *Phantastes*, the old lady's spinning takes Anodos to the past, the present, and the future. For MacDonald, spinning is a metaphor for story.

"O my beloved, thou art come, and I am blessed."

Her soft fingers speedily overcame the hard clasp of his helmet; one by one she undid the buckles of his armour; and she toiled under the weight of the mail, as she *would* carry it aside. Then she unclasped his greaves, and unbuckled his spurs; and once more she sprang into his arms, and laid her head where she could now feel the beating of his heart. Then she disengaged herself from his embrace, and, moving back a step or two, gazed at him. He stood there a mighty form, crowned with a noble head, where all sadness had disappeared, or had been absorbed in solemn purpose. Yet I suppose that he looked more thoughtful than the lady had expected to see him, for she did not renew her caresses, although his face glowed with love, and the few words he spoke were as mighty deeds for strength; but she led him towards the hearth, and seated him in an ancient chair, and set wine before him, and sat at his feet.

"I am sad," he said, "when I think of the youth whom I met twice in the forests of Fairy Land; and who, you say, twice, with his songs, roused you from the death-sleep of an evil enchantment. There was something noble in him, but it was a nobleness of thought, and not of deed. He may yet perish of vile fear."

"Ah!" returned the lady, "you saved him once, and for that I thank you; for may I not say that I somewhat loved him? But tell me how you fared, when you struck your battle-axe into the ash-tree, and he came and found you; for so much of the story you had told me, when the beggar-child came and took you away."

"As soon as I saw him," rejoined the knight, "I knew that earthly arms availed not against such as he; and that my soul must meet him in its naked strength. So I unclasped my helm,[24] and flung it on the ground; and, holding my good axe yet in my hand, gazed at him with steady eyes. On he came, a horror indeed, but I did not flinch. Endurance must conquer, where force could not reach. He came nearer and nearer, till the ghastly face was close to mine. A shudder as of death ran through me; but I think I did not move, for he seemed to quail, and retreated. As soon as he gave back, I struck one more sturdy blow on the stem of his tree, that the forest rang; and then looked at him again. He writhed and grinned with rage and apparent pain, and again approached me, but retreated sooner than before. I heeded him no more, but hewed with a will at the tree, till the trunk creaked, and the head bowed, and with a crash it fell to the earth. Then I looked up from my labour, and lo! the spectre had vanished, and I saw him no more; nor ever in my wanderings have I heard of him again."

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[24] Helmet.

"Well struck! well withstood! my hero," said the lady.

"But," said the knight, somewhat troubled, "dost thou love the youth still?"

"Ah!" she replied, "how can I help it? He woke me from worse than death; he loved me. I had never been for thee, if he had not sought me first. But I love him not as I love thee. He was but the moon of my night; thou art the sun of my day, O beloved."

"Thou art right," returned the noble man. "It were hard, indeed, not to have some love in return for such a gift as he hath given thee. I, too, owe him more than words can speak."

Humbled before them, with an aching and desolate heart, I yet could not restrain my words:

"Let me, then, be the moon of thy night still, O woman! And when thy day is beclouded, as the fairest days will be, let some song of mine comfort thee, as an old, withered, half-forgotten thing, that belongs to an ancient mournful hour of uncompleted birth, which yet was beautiful in its time."

They sat silent, and I almost thought they were listening. The colour of the lady's eyes grew deeper and deeper; the slow tears grew, and filled them, and overflowed. They rose, and passed, hand in hand, close to where I stood; and each looked towards me in passing. Then they disappeared through a door which closed behind them; but, ere it closed, I saw that the room into which it opened was a rich chamber, hung with gorgeous arras.[25] I stood with an ocean of sighs frozen in my bosom. I could remain no longer. She was near me, and I could not see her; near me in the arms of one loved better than I, and I would not see her, and I would not be by her. But how to escape from the nearness of the best beloved? I had not this time forgotten the mark; for the fact that I could not enter the sphere of these living beings kept me aware that, for me, I moved in a vision, while they moved in life. I looked all about for the mark, but could see it nowhere; for I avoided looking just where it was. There the dull red cipher[26] glowed, on the very door of their secret chamber. Struck with agony, I dashed it open, and fell at the feet of the ancient woman, who still spun on, the whole dissolved ocean of my sighs bursting from me in a storm of tearless sobs. Whether I fainted or slept, I do not know; but, as I returned to consciousness, before I seemed to have power to move, I heard the woman singing, and could distinguish the words:

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[25] Tapestry on a wall or as a cover for an alcove.

[26] Code or secret manner of writing, in this case the mark indicating the way back to the old woman's cottage.

O light of dead and of dying days!
  O Love! in thy glory go,
In a rosy mist and a moony maze,
  O'er the pathless peaks of snow.

But what is left for the cold grey soul,
  That moans like a wounded dove?
One wine is left in the broken bowl—
  'Tis—*To love, and love, and love.*

Now I could weep. When she saw me weeping, she sang:

Better to sit at the waters' birth,
  Than a sea of waves to win;
To live in the love that floweth forth,
  Than the love that cometh in.

Be thy heart a well of love, my child,
  Flowing, and free, and sure;
For a cistern of love,[27] though undefiled,
  Keeps not the spirit pure.

I rose from the earth, loving the white lady as I had never loved her before.

Then I walked up to the door of Dismay, and opened it, and went out. And lo! I came forth upon a crowded street, where men and women went to and fro in multitudes. I knew it well; and, turning to one hand, walked sadly along the pavement. Suddenly I saw approaching me, a little way off, a form well known to me (*well known!*—alas, how weak the word!) in the years when I thought my boyhood was left behind, and shortly before I entered the realm of Fairy Land. Wrong and Sorrow had gone together, hand-in-hand, as it is well they do. Unchangeably dear was that face. It lay in my heart as a child lies in its own white bed; but I could not meet her.

"Anything but that," I said; and, turning aside, sprang up the steps to a door, on which I fancied I saw the mystic sign. I entered—not the mysterious cottage, but her home. I rushed wildly on, and stood by the door of her room.

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[27] A cistern is a tank for storing water. The metaphor here suggests that storing love is not productive of anything; love ought to flow freely and not be stored away.

"She is out," I said, "I will see the old room once more."

I opened the door gently, and stood in a great solemn church. A deep-toned bell, whose sounds throbbed and echoed and swam through the empty building, struck the hour of midnight. The moon shone through the windows of the clerestory,[28] and enough of the ghostly radiance was diffused through the church to let me see, walking with a stately, yet somewhat trailing and stumbling step, down the opposite aisle, for I stood in one of the transepts,[29] a figure dressed in a white robe, whether for the night, or for that longer night which lies too deep for the day, I could not tell. Was it she? and was this her chamber? I crossed the church, and followed. The figure stopped, seemed to ascend as it were a high bed, and lay down. I reached the place where it lay, glimmering white. The bed was a tomb. The light was too ghostly to see clearly, but I passed my hand over the face and the hands and the feet, which were all bare. They were cold—they were marble, but I knew them. It grew dark. I turned to retrace my steps, but found, ere long, that I had wandered into what seemed a little chapel. I groped about, seeking the door. Everything I touched belonged to the dead. My hands fell on the cold effigy[30] of a knight who lay with his legs crossed and his sword broken beside him. He lay in his noble rest, and I lived on in ignoble strife. I felt for the left hand and a certain finger; I found there the ring I knew: he was one of my own ancestors. I was in the chapel over the burial-vault of my race. I called aloud: "If any of the dead are moving here, let them take pity upon me, for I, alas! am still alive; and let some dead woman comfort me, for I am a stranger in the land of the dead, and see no light." A warm kiss alighted on my lips through the dark. And I said, "The dead kiss well; I will not be afraid." And a great hand was reached out of the dark, and grasped mine for a moment, mightily and tenderly. I said to myself: "The veil between,[31] though very dark, is very thin."

Groping my way further, I stumbled over the heavy stone that covered the entrance of the vault: and, in stumbling, descried upon the stone the mark, glowing in red fire. I caught the great ring. All my effort could not have moved the huge slab; but it opened the door of the cottage, and I threw myself once more, pale and speechless, on the couch beside the ancient dame. She sang once more:—

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[28] In church architecture the clerestory is the upper portion of the nave, transepts, and choir. Windows shed light to the spaces below because they are "clear" of obstruction.

[29] Another architectural term for a cruciform church (the gothic church, shaped like a cross). The transepts form the arms of the cross at right angles to the nave (the long central part of the building running from the west entrance to the choir.

[30] Sculpture or image of a person.

[31] Compare with Shelley's lines in *Prometheus Unbound*, Act III, lines 113-114: "Death is the veil which those who live call life; / They sleep, and it is lifted."

Thou dreamest: on a rock thou art,
  High o'er the broken wave;
Thou fallest with a fearful start,
  But not into thy grave;
For, waking in the morning's light,
  Thou smilest at the vanished night.

So wilt thou sink, all pale and dumb,
  Into the fainting gloom;
But ere the coming terrors come,
  Thou wak'st—where is the tomb?
Thou wak'st—the dead ones smile above,
  With hovering arms of sleepless love.

She paused; then sang again:

We weep for gladness, weep for grief;
  The tears they are the same;
We sigh for longing, and relief;
  The sighs have but one name,

And mingled in the dying strife,
  Are moans that are not sad;
The pangs of death are throbs of life,
  Its sighs are sometimes glad.

The face is very strange and white:
  It is Earth's only spot
That feebly flickers back the light
  The living seeth not.

I fell asleep, and slept a dreamless sleep, for I know not how long. When I awoke, I found that my hostess had moved from where she had been sitting, and now sat between me and the fourth door. I guessed that her design was to prevent my entering there. I sprang from the couch, and darted past her to the door. I opened it at once and went out. All I remember is a cry of distress from the woman: "Don't go there, my child! Don't go there!" But I was gone.

I knew nothing more; or, if I did, I had forgot it all when I awoke to consciousness, lying on the floor of the cottage, with my head in the lap of the woman, who was weeping over me, and stroking my hair with both hands, talking to me as a mother might talk to a sick and sleeping, or a dead child. As soon as I looked up and saw her, she smiled through her tears; smiled with withered face and young eyes, till her countenance was irradiated with the light of the smile. Then she bathed my head and face and hands in an icy cold, colourless liquid, which smelt a little of damp earth. Immediately I was able to sit up. She rose and put some food before me. When I had eaten, she said:

"Listen to me, my child. You must leave me directly!"

"Leave you!" I said. "I am so happy with you. I never was so happy in my life."

"But you must go," she rejoined sadly. "Listen! What do you hear?"

"I hear the sound as of a great throbbing of water."

"Ah! you do hear it? Well, I had to go through that door—the door of the Timeless"[32] (and she shuddered as she pointed to the fourth door)—"to find you; for if I had not gone, you would never have entered again; and because I went, the waters around my cottage will rise and rise, and flow and come, till they build a great firmament of waters over my dwelling. But as long as I keep my fire burning, they cannot enter. I have fuel enough for years; and after one year they will sink away again, and be just as they were before you came. I have not been buried for a hundred years now." And she smiled and wept.

"Alas! alas!" I cried. "I have brought this evil on the best and kindest of friends, who has filled my heart with great gifts."

"Do not think of that," she rejoined. "I can bear it very well. You will come back to me some day, I know. But I beg you, for my sake, my dear child, to do one thing. In whatever sorrow you may be, however inconsolable and irremediable it may appear, believe me that the old woman in the cottage, with the young eyes," (and she smiled), "knows something, though she must not always tell it, that would quite satisfy you about it, even in the worst moments of your distress. Now you must go."

"But how can I go, if the waters are all about, and if the doors all lead into other regions and other worlds?"

"This is not an island," she replied; "but is joined to the land by a narrow neck; and for the door, I will lead you myself through the right one."

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[32] The "door of the Timeless" is the fourth door to Eternity, which may only be experienced after the state of perfection has been realized. In other words, the mystery of what Revelation terms "Time no longer" is unavailable to the living (Revelation 10:6).

She took my hand, and led me through the third door; whereupon I found myself standing in the deep grassy turf on which I had landed from the little boat, but upon the opposite side of the cottage. She pointed out the direction I must take, to find the isthmus and escape the rising waters.

Then putting her arms around me, she held me to her bosom; and as I kissed her, I felt as if I were leaving my mother for the first time, and could not help weeping bitterly. At length she gently pushed me away, and with the words, "Go, my son, and do something worth doing," turned back, and, entering the cottage, closed the door behind her.

I felt very desolate as I went.

Chapter XX

Thou hadst no fame, that which thou didst like good
Was but thy appetite that swayed thy blood
For that time to the best, for as a blast
That through a house comes, unusually doth cast
Things out of order, yet by chance may come
And blow some one thing to his proper room,
So did thy appetite, and not thy zeal,
Sway thee by chance to do some one thing well.
FLETCHER *Faithful Shepherdess*[1]

The noble hart that harbours vertuous thought,
And is with childe of glorious great intent,
Can never rest, untill it forth have brought
Th' eternall brood of glorie excellent.
SPENSER.—*The Faerie Queene.*[2]

I had not gone very far before I felt that the turf beneath my feet was soaked with the rising waters. But I reached the isthmus[3] in safety. It was rocky, and so much higher than the level of the peninsula, that I had plenty of time to cross. I saw on each side of me the water rising rapidly, altogether without wind, or violent motion, or broken waves, but as if a slow strong fire were glowing beneath it. Ascending a steep acclivity,[4] I found myself at last in an open, rocky country. After travelling for some hours, as nearly in a straight line as I could, I arrived at a lonely tower, built on the top of a little hill, which overlooked the whole neighbouring country. As I approached, I heard the clang of an anvil;[5] and so rapid were the blows, that I despaired of making myself heard till a pause in the work should ensue. It was some minutes before a cessation took place; but when it did, I knocked loudly, and had not long to wait; for, a moment after, the door was partly opened by a noble-looking youth, half-undressed, glowing with heat, and begrimed with the blackness of the forge. In one hand he held a sword, so lately from the furnace that it yet shone with a dull fire. As soon as he saw me, he threw the door wide open, and standing aside, invited me very cordially to enter. I did so; when he shut and bolted the door most carefully, and then led the way inwards. He brought me into a rude[6] hall, which seemed to occupy almost the whole of the ground floor of the little tower, and which I saw was now being used as a workshop. A huge fire roared on the hearth, beside which was an anvil. By the anvil stood, in similar undress, and in a waiting attitude, hammer in hand, a second youth, tall as the former, but far more slightly built. Reversing the usual course of perception in such meetings, I thought them, at first sight, very unlike; and at the second glance, knew that they were brothers. The former, and apparently the elder, was muscular and dark, with curling hair, and large hazel eyes, which sometimes grew wondrously soft. The second was slender and fair, yet with a countenance like an eagle, and an eye which, though pale blue, shone with an almost fierce expression. He stood erect, as if looking from a lofty mountain crag, over a vast plain outstretched below. As soon as we entered the hall, the elder turned to me, and I saw that a glow of satisfaction shone on both their faces. To my surprise and great pleasure, he addressed me thus:

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[1] John Fletcher (1579-1625) was a contemporary of William Shakespeare and followed him as main playwright for the King's Men. *The Faithful Shepherdess* (produced in 1608, probably published in 1609) is also important for Fletcher's definition of tragicomedy, which highlights the importance of near-death to the genre.

[2] Edmund Spenser (1552-1599), most famous for *The Faerie Queene* (1590; 1596), is a key influence on MacDonald generally and on *Phantastes* in particular. John Docherty writes of Spenser's influence on MacDonald ("Sources of Phantastes," *North Wind A Journal of George MacDonald Studies*, vol. 9, 1990.

[3] Narrow portion of land surrounded on each side by water.

[4] Steep slope of a hill.

"Brother, will you sit by the fire and rest, till we finish this part of our work?"

I signified my assent; and, resolved to await any disclosure they might be inclined to make, seated myself in silence near the hearth.

The elder brother then laid the sword in the fire, covered it well over, and when it had attained a sufficient degree of heat, drew it out and laid it on the anvil, moving it carefully about, while the younger, with a succession of quick smart blows, appeared either to be welding it, or hammering one part of it to a consenting shape with the rest. Having finished, they laid it carefully in the fire; and, when it was very hot indeed, plunged it into a vessel full of some liquid, whence a blue flame sprang upwards, as the glowing steel entered. There they left it; and, drawing two stools to the fire, sat down, one on each side of me.

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[5] Block of steel or iron where metal is hammered and shaped into specific shapes; a tool of blacksmiths.

[6] Harsh or violent, an uncomfortable place.

"We are very glad to see you, brother. We have been expecting you for some days," said the dark-haired youth.

"I am proud to be called your brother," I rejoined; "and you will not think I refuse the name, if I desire to know why you honour me with it?"

"Ah! then he does not know about it," said the younger. "We thought you had known of the bond betwixt us, and the work we have to do together. You must tell him, brother, from the first."

So the elder began:

"Our father is king of this country. Before we were born, three giant brothers[7] had appeared in the land. No one knew exactly when, and no one had the least idea whence they came. They took possession of a ruined castle that had stood unchanged and unoccupied within the memory of any of the country people. The vaults of this castle had remained uninjured by time, and these, I presume, they made use of at first. They were rarely seen, and never offered the least injury to any one; so that they were regarded in the neighbourhood as at least perfectly harmless, if not rather benevolent beings. But it began to be observed, that the old castle had assumed somehow or other, no one knew when or how, a somewhat different look from what it used to have. Not only were several breaches in the lower part of the walls built up, but actually some of the battlements[8] which yet stood, had been repaired, apparently to prevent them from falling into worse decay, while the more important parts were being restored. Of course, every one supposed the giants must have a hand in the work, but no one ever saw them engaged in it. The peasants became yet more uneasy, after one, who had concealed himself, and watched all night, in the neighbourhood of the castle, reported that he had seen, in full moonlight, the three huge giants working with might and main, all night long, restoring to their former position some massive stones, formerly steps of a grand turnpike stair,[9] a great portion of which had long since fallen, along with part of the wall of the round tower in which it had been built. This wall they were completing, foot by foot, along with the stair. But the people said they had no just pretext for interfering: although the real reason for letting the giants alone was, that everybody was far too much afraid of them to interrupt them.

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[7] Giants are popular creatures in fairy tales, the most famous being those in "Jack in the Beanstalk" and "Jack the Giant Killer." MacDonald retold a Norwegian fairy tale as "The Giant's Heart," which was an interpolated tale in the novel *Adela Cathcart*. Oscar Wilde rehabilitated the giant in "The Selfish Giant" (1888).

[8] An indentation for a parapet, a stone or earth barrier designed to conceal troops and provide protection from enemies' arrows and other missiles.

[9] A turnpike is a spiked barrier for defense; a turnpike stair is a staircase with

"At length, with the help of a neighbouring quarry,[10] the whole of the external wall of the castle was finished. And now the country folks were in greater fear than before. But for several years the giants remained very peaceful. The reason of this was afterwards supposed to be the fact, that they were distantly related to several good people in the country; for, as long as these lived, they remained quiet; but as soon as they were all dead the real nature of the giants broke out. Having completed the outside of their castle, they proceeded, by spoiling the country houses around them, to make a quiet luxurious provision for their comfort within. Affairs reached such a pass, that the news of their robberies came to my father's ears; but he, alas! was so crippled in his resources, by a war he was carrying on with a neighbouring prince, that he could only spare a very few men, to attempt the capture of their stronghold. Upon these the giants issued in the night, and slew every man of them. And now, grown bolder by success and impunity,[11] they no longer confined their depredations[12] to property, but began to seize the persons of their distinguished neighbours, knights and ladies, and hold them in durance, the misery of which was heightened by all manner of indignity, until they were redeemed by their friends, at an exorbitant ransom. Many knights have adventured their overthrow, but to their own instead; for they have all been slain, or captured, or forced to make a hasty retreat. To crown their enormities, if any man now attempts their destruction, they, immediately upon his defeat, put one or more of their captives to a shameful death, on a turret[13] in sight of all passers-by; so that they have been much less molested of late; and we, although we have burned, for years, to attack these demons and destroy them, dared not, for the sake of their captives, risk the adventure, before we should have reached at least our earliest manhood. Now, however, we are preparing for the attempt; and the

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a turnpike created in a spiral and is favored in Scotland, MacDonald's country of birth.

[10] Site where stone is mined, leaving a large hole in the earth.

[11] Escape from punishment. This word is part of the family motto in Edgar Allan Poe's "Cask of Amontillado" (1846): "punish with impunity."

[12] Plundering, pillaging, and ravaging.

[13] Small tower that is part of a larger castle.

grounds of this preparation are these. Having only the resolution, and not the experience, necessary for the undertaking, we went and consulted a lonely woman of wisdom, who lives not very far from here, in the direction of the quarter from which you have come. She received us most kindly, and gave us what seems to us the best of advice. She first inquired what experience we had had in arms. We told her we had been well exercised from our boyhood, and for some years had kept ourselves in constant practice, with a view to this necessity.

"'But you have not actually fought for life and death?' said she.

"We were forced to confess we had not.

"'So much the better in some respects,' she replied. 'Now listen to me. Go first and work with an armourer,[14] for as long time as you find needful to obtain a knowledge of his craft; which will not be long, seeing your hearts will be all in the work. Then go to some lonely tower, you two alone. Receive no visits from man or woman. There forge for yourselves every piece of armour that you wish to wear, or to use, in your coming encounter. And keep up your exercises. As, however, two of you can be no match for the three giants, I will find you, if I can, a third brother, who will take on himself the third share of the fight, and the preparation. Indeed, I have already seen one who will, I think, be the very man for your fellowship; but it will be some time before he comes to me. He is wandering now without an aim. I will show him to you in a glass, and, when he comes, you will know him at once. If he will share your endeavours, you must teach him all you know, and he will repay you well, in present song, and in future deeds.'

"She opened the door of a curious old cabinet that stood in the room. On the inside of this door was an oval convex mirror. Looking in it for some time, we at length saw reflected the place where we stood, and the old dame seated in her chair. Our forms were not reflected. But at the feet of the dame, lay a young man, yourself, weeping.

"'Surely this youth will not serve our ends,' said I, 'for he weeps.'

"The old woman smiled. 'Past tears are present strength,' said she.

"'Oh!' said my brother, 'I saw you weep once over an eagle you shot.'[15]

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[14] Someone who makes or repairs weapons and armor of mail (metal rings attached together).

[15] Victorian readers would quickly connect the shooting of the eagle with the killing of the albatross in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798), which was published in the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* by William

"'That was because it was so like you, brother,' I replied; 'but indeed, this youth may have better cause for tears than that—I was wrong.'

"'Wait a while,' said the woman; 'if I mistake not, he will make you weep till your tears are dry for ever. Tears are the only cure for weeping. And you may have need of the cure, before you go forth to fight the giants. You must wait for him, in your tower, till he comes.'

"Now, if you will join us, we will soon teach you to make your armour;[16] and we will fight together, and work together, and love each other as never three loved before. And you will sing to us, will you not?"

"That I will, when I can," I answered; "but it is only at times that the power of song comes upon me. For that I must wait; but I have a feeling that if I work well, song will not be far off to enliven[17] the labour."

This was all the compact made: the brothers required nothing more, and I did not think of giving anything more. I rose, and threw off my upper garments.

"I know the uses of the sword," I said. "I am ashamed of my white hands beside yours so nobly soiled and hard; but that shame will soon be wiped away."

"No, no; we will not work to-day. Rest is as needful as toil. Bring the wine, brother; it is your turn to serve to-day."

The younger brother soon covered a table with rough viands, but good wine; and we ate and drank heartily, beside our work. Before the meal was over, I had learned all their story. Each had something in his heart which made the conviction, that he would victoriously perish in the coming conflict, a real sorrow to him. Otherwise they thought they would have lived enough. The causes of their trouble were respectively these:—

Wordsworth and Coleridge. *Lyrical Ballads* paved the way for the Romantic movement in literature in England. In *The Princess and Curdie* (1883) MacDonald has the miner-boy Curdie shoot a bird for no reason, thus indicating his fall from goodness and propelling him to undertake a quest to appease for his wrongdoing.

[16] Philip Pullman, who has identified MacDonald as an inspiration (and C. S. Lewis as his writer-antagonist) also writes about the importance of building armour: in *The Golden Compass* (in England, *Northern Lights*, 1995) Pullman creates Iorek Byrnison, an armoured bear, who is tricked out of his sky-iron armour that protects him and acts like his soul. Iorek further demonstrates his armour-crafting abilities by mending the subtle knife, a magical knife that can cut passages to alternative worlds.

[17] To make cheerful and lively, to relieve the monotony of a task.

While they wrought with an armourer, in a city famed for workmanship in steel and silver, the elder had fallen in love with a lady as far beneath him in real rank, as she was above the station he had as apprentice to an armourer. Nor did he seek to further his suit by discovering himself; but there was simply so much manhood about him, that no one ever thought of rank when in his company. This is what his brother said about it. The lady could not help loving him in return. He told her when he left her, that he had a perilous adventure before him, and that when it was achieved, she would either see him return to claim her, or hear that he had died with honour. The younger brother's grief arose from the fact, that, if they were both slain, his old father, the king, would be childless. His love for his father was so exceeding, that to one unable to sympathize with it, it would have appeared extravagant. Both loved him equally at heart; but the love of the younger had been more developed, because his thoughts and anxieties had not been otherwise occupied. When at home, he had been his constant companion; and, of late, had ministered to the infirmities of his growing age. The youth was never weary of listening to the tales of his sire's youthful adventures; and had not yet in the smallest degree lost the conviction, that his father was the greatest man in the world. The grandest triumph possible to his conception was, to return to his father, laden with the spoils of one of the hated giants. But they both were in some dread, lest the thought of the loneliness of these two might occur to them, in the moment when decision was most necessary, and disturb, in some degree, the self-possession requisite for the success of their attempt. For, as I have said, they were yet untried in actual conflict. "Now," thought I, "I see to what the powers of my gift must minister." For my own part, I did not dread death, for I had nothing to care to live for; but I dreaded the encounter because of the responsibility connected with it. I resolved however to work hard, and thus grow cool, and quick, and forceful.

The time passed away in work and song, in talk and ramble, in friendly fight and brotherly aid. I would not forge for myself armour of heavy mail like theirs, for I was not so powerful as they, and depended more for any success I might secure, upon nimbleness of motion, certainty of eye, and ready response of hand. Therefore I began to make for myself a shirt of steel plates and rings; which work, while more troublesome, was better suited to me than the heavier labour. Much assistance did the brothers give me, even after, by their instructions, I was able to make some progress alone. Their work was in a moment abandoned, to render any required aid to mine. As the old woman had promised, I tried to repay them with song; and many were the tears they both shed over my ballads and dirges.[18] The songs they liked best to hear were two which I made for them. They were not half so good as many others I knew, especially some I had learned from the wise woman in the cottage; but what comes nearest to our needs we like the best.

I.

The king sat on his throne,
  Glowing in gold and red;
The crown in his right hand shone,
  And the grey hairs crowned his head.

His only son walks in,
  And in walls of steel he stands:
"Make me, O father, strong to win,
  "With the blessing of holy hands."

He knelt before his sire,
  Who blessed him with feeble smile;
His eyes shone out with a kingly fire,
  But his old lips quivered the while.

"Go to the fight, my son,
  "Bring back the giant's head;
"And the crown with which my brows have done,
  "Shall glitter on thine instead."

"My father, I seek no crown,
  "But unspoken praise from thee;
"For thy people's good, and thy renown,
  "I will die to set them free."

The king sat down and waited there,
  And rose not, night nor day;
Till a sound of shouting filled the air,
  And cries of a sore dismay.

Then like a king he sat once more,
  With the crown upon his head;
And up to the throne the people bore
  A mighty giant dead.

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[18] A ballad is a song or poem usually focused on something romantic or sentimental. A dirge is a song or lament for the dead. To sing both ballads and dirges, Anodos prepares the reader for the tragic events that will eventually happen.

And up to the throne the people bore
  A pale and lifeless boy.
The king rose up like a prophet of yore,
  In a lofty, deathlike joy.

He put the crown on the chilly brow:
  "Thou should'st have reigned with me;
"But Death is the king of both, and now
  "I go to obey with thee.

"Surely some good in me there lay,
  "To beget the noble one."
The old man smiled like a winter day,
  And fell beside his son.

II.

"O lady, thy lover is dead," they cried;
  "He is dead, but hath slain the foe;
"He hath left his name to be magnified
  "In a song of wonder and woe."

"Alas! I am well repaid," said she,
  "With a pain that stings like joy;
"For I feared, from his tenderness to me,
  "That he was but a feeble boy.

"Now I shall hold my head on high,
  "The queen among my kind.
"If ye hear a sound, 'tis only a sigh
  "For a glory left behind."

The first three times I sang these songs, they both wept passionately. But after the third time, they wept no more. Their eyes shone, and their faces grew pale, but they never wept at any of my songs again.

Chapter XXI

I put my life in my hands.
The Book of Judges.[1]

At length, with much toil and equal delight, our armour was finished. We armed each other, and tested the strength of the defence, with many blows of loving force. I was inferior in strength to both my brothers, but a little more agile than either; and upon this agility, joined to precision in hitting with the point of my weapon, I grounded my hopes of success in the ensuing combat. I likewise laboured to develope yet more the keenness of sight with which I was naturally gifted; and, from the remarks of my companions, I soon learned that my endeavours were not in vain.

The morning arrived on which we had determined to make the attempt, and succeed or perish—perhaps both. We had resolved to fight on foot; knowing that the mishap of many of the knights who had made the attempt, had resulted from the fright of their horses at the appearance of the giants; and believing with Sir Gawain,[2] that, though mare's sons might be false to us, the earth would never prove a traitor. But most of our preparations were, in their immediate aim at least, frustrated.

We rose, that fatal morning, by day-break. We had rested from all labour the day before, and now were fresh as the lark. We bathed in cold spring water, and dressed ourselves in clean garments, with a sense of preparation, as for a solemn festivity. When we had broken our fast, I took an old lyre, which I had found in the tower and had myself repaired, and sung for the last time the two ballads of which I have said so much already. I followed them with this, for a closing song:—

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[1] *The Book of Judges* is the seventh book of the Hebrew and the Christian Bible (Old Testament). The line quoted is from Chapter 12:3. *Judges* tells the stories of the heroes (judges) who restore the Israelites after they have fallen. The pattern of fall and rise is the pattern of Anodos's experiences in *Phantastes*.

[2] Another of Arthur's Knights of the Round Table. He is most renowned for his adventure with the Green Knight. In some tales, Gawain rides a mare named Blanca. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, one of the most famous chivalric romances, was published in the late fourteenth century. J. R. R. Tolkien did a translation of the romance into modern English.

Oh, well for him who breaks his dream
  With the blow that ends the strife;
And, waking, knows the peace that flows
  Around the pain of life!

We are dead, my brothers! Our bodies clasp,
  As an armour, our souls about;
This hand is the battle-axe I grasp,
  And this my hammer stout.[3]

Fear not, my brothers, for we are dead;
  No noise can break our rest;
The calm of the grave is about the head,
  And the heart heaves not the breast.

And our life we throw to our people back,
  To live with, a further store;
We leave it them, that there be no lack
  In the land where we live no more.

Oh, well for him who breaks his dream
  With the blow that ends the strife;
And, waking, knows the peace that flows
  Around the noise of life![4]

As the last few tones of the instrument were following, like a dirge, the death of the song, we all sprang to our feet. For, through one of the little windows of the tower, towards which I had looked as I sang, I saw, suddenly rising over the edge of the slope on which our tower stood, three enormous heads. The brothers knew at once, by my looks, what caused my sudden movement. We were utterly unarmed, and there was no time to arm. But we seemed to adopt the same resolution simultaneously; for each caught up his favourite weapon, and, leaving his defence behind, sprang to the door. I snatched up a long rapier, abruptly, but very finely pointed, in my sword-hand, and in the other a sabre; the elder brother seized his heavy battle-axe; and the younger, a great, two-handed sword, which he wielded in one hand, like a feather. We had just time to get clear of the tower, embrace and say good-bye, and part to some little distance, that we might not incumber each other's motions, ere the triple giant-brotherhood drew near to attack us. They were about twice our height, and armed to the teeth. Through the visors of their helmets, their monstrous eyes shone with a horrible ferocity. I was in the middle position, and the middle giant approached me. My eyes were busy with his armour, and I was not a moment in settling my mode of attack. I saw that his body-armour was somewhat clumsily made, and that the overlappings in the lower part had more play than necessary; and I hoped that, in a fortunate moment, some joint would open a little, in a visible and accessible part. I stood till he came near enough to aim a blow at me with the mace, which has been, in all ages, the favourite weapon of giants, when, of course, I leaped aside, and let the blow fall upon the spot where I had been standing. I expected this would strain the joints of his armour yet more. Full of fury, he made at me again; but I kept him busy, constantly eluding his blows, and hoping thus to fatigue him. He did not seem to fear any assault from me, and I attempted none as yet; but while I watched his motions in order to avoid his blows, I, at the same time, kept equal watch upon those joints of his armour, through some one of which I hoped to reach his life. At length, as if somewhat fatigued, he paused a moment, and drew himself slightly up; I bounded forward, foot and hand, ran my rapier right through to the armour of his back, let go the hilt, and passing under his right arm, turned as he fell, and flew at him with my sabre. At one happy blow, I divided the band of his helmet, which fell off, and allowed me, with a second cut across the eyes, to blind him quite; after which I clove his head, and turned, uninjured, to see how my brothers had fared. Both the giants were down, but so were my brothers. I flew first to the one and then to the other couple. Both pairs of combatants were dead, and yet locked together, as in the death struggle. The elder had buried his battle-axe in the body of his foe, and had fallen beneath him as he fell. The giant had strangled him in his own death-agonies. The younger had nearly hewn off the left leg of his enemy; and, grappled with in the act, had, while they rolled together on the earth, found for his dagger a passage betwixt the gorget and cuirass[5] of the giant, and stabbed him mortally in the throat. The blood from the giant's throat was yet pouring over the hand of his foe, which still grasped the hilt of the dagger sheathed in the wound. They lay silent. I, the least worthy, remained the sole survivor in the lists.

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[3] Strong and formidable.

[4] Death signals peace whereas life is full of sound and fury, filled with noise. Compare with Tennyson's *In Memoriam A. H. H.* (1850): "He is not here; but far away / The noise of life begins again" (Stanza VII).

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[5] A gorget is a piece of armour that covers the throat, and cuirass is armour that covers the torso. The knight thrusts his dagger between the two pieces of armour and into the giant's throat, or gullet.

As I stood exhausted amidst the dead, after the first worthy deed of my life, I suddenly looked behind me, and there lay the Shadow, black in the sunshine. I went into the lonely tower, and there lay the useless armour of the noble youths—supine[6] as they. Ah, how sad it looked! It was a glorious death, but it was death. My songs could not comfort me now. I was almost ashamed that I was alive, when they, the true-hearted, were no more. And yet I breathed freer to think that I had gone through the trial, and had not failed. And perhaps I may be forgiven, if some feelings of pride arose in my bosom, when I looked down on the mighty form that lay dead by my hand.

"After all, however," I said to myself, and my heart sank, "it was only skill. Your giant was but a blunderer."[7]

I left the bodies of friends and foes, peaceful enough when the death fight was over, and, hastening to the country below, roused the peasants. They came with shouting and gladness, bringing waggons to carry the bodies. I resolved to take the princes home to their father, each as he lay, in the arms of his country's foe. But first I searched the giants, and found the keys of their castle, to which I repaired,[8] followed by a great company of the people. It was a place of wonderful strength. I released the prisoners, knights and ladies, all in a sad condition, from the cruelties and neglects of the giants. It humbled me to see them crowding round me with thanks, when in truth the glorious brothers, lying dead by their lonely tower, were those to whom the thanks belonged. I had but aided in carrying out the thought born in their brain, and uttered in visible form before ever I laid hold thereupon. Yet I did count myself happy to have been chosen for their brother in this great dead.

After a few hours spent in refreshing and clothing the prisoners, we all commenced our journey towards the capital. This was slow at first; but, as the strength and spirits of the prisoners returned, it became more rapid, and in three days we reached the palace of the king. As we entered the city gates, with the huge bulks lying each on a waggon drawn by horses, and two of them inextricably intertwined with the dead bodies of their princes, the people raised a shout and then a cry, and followed in multitudes the solemn procession.

I will not attempt to describe the behaviour of the grand old king. Joy and pride in his sons overcame his sorrow at their loss. On me he heaped every kindness that heart could devise or hand execute. He used to sit and question me, night after night, about everything that was in any way connected with them and their preparations. Our mode of life, and relation to each other, during the time we spent together, was a constant theme. He entered into the minutest details of the construction of the armour, even to a peculiar mode of riveting some of the plates, with unwearying interest. This armour I had intended to beg of the king, as my sole memorials of the contest; but, when I saw the delight he took in contemplating it, and the consolation it appeared to afford him in his sorrow, I could not ask for it; but, at his request, left my own, weapons and all, to be joined with theirs in a trophy, erected in the grand square of the palace. The king, with gorgeous ceremony, dubbed me knight with his own old hand, in which trembled the sword of his youth.

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[6] Recumbent or lying on one's back. *Supine* also means passive or inert, and so the armour lies on the ground, inert, just as the two young men also lie inert.

[7] Someone who stumbles about blindly and stupidly.

[8] To go.

During the short time I remained, my company was, naturally, much courted by the young nobles. I was in a constant round of gaiety and diversion, notwithstanding that the court was in mourning. For the country was so rejoiced at the death of the giants, and so many of their lost friends had been restored to the nobility and men of wealth, that the gladness surpassed the grief. "Ye have indeed left your lives to your people, my great brothers!" I said.

But I was ever and ever haunted by the old shadow, which I had not seen all the time that I was at work in the tower. Even in the society of the ladies of the court, who seemed to think it only their duty to make my stay there as pleasant to me as possible, I could not help being conscious of its presence, although it might not be annoying me at the time. At length, somewhat weary of uninterrupted pleasure, and nowise strengthened thereby, either in body or mind, I put on a splendid suit of armour of steel inlaid with silver, which the old king had given me, and, mounting the horse on which it had been brought to me, took my leave of the palace, to visit the distant city in which the lady dwelt, whom the elder prince had loved. I anticipated a sore task, in conveying to her the news of his glorious fate: but this trial was spared me, in a manner as strange as anything that had happened to me in Fairy Land.

Chapter XXII

Niemand hat meine Gestalt als der *Ich*
Schoppe, in JEAN PAUL'S *Titan*.[1]
No one has my form but the *I*.

Joy's a subtil elf.
I think man's happiest when he forgets himself.
CYRIL TOURNEUR.—*The Revenger's Tragedy*.[2]

On the third day of my journey, I was riding gently along a road, apparently little frequented, to judge from the grass that grew upon it. I was approaching a forest. Everywhere in Fairy Land, forests are the places where one may most certainly expect adventures. As I drew near, a youth, unarmed, gentle, and beautiful, who had just cut a branch from a yew growing on the skirts of the wood, evidently to make himself a bow,[3] met me, and thus accosted me:

"Sir knight, be careful as thou ridest through this forest; for it is said to be strangely enchanted, in a sort which even those who have been witnesses of its enchantment, can hardly describe."

I thanked him for his advice, which I promised to follow, and rode on. But the moment I entered the wood, it seemed to me that, if enchantment there was, it must be of a good kind; for the Shadow, which had been more than usually dark and distressing, since I had set out on this journey, suddenly disappeared. I felt a wonderful elevation of spirits, and began to reflect on my past life, and especially on my combat with the giants, with such satisfaction, that I had actually to remind myself, that I had only killed one of them; and that, but for the brothers, I should never have had the idea of attacking them, not to mention the smallest power of standing to it. Still I rejoiced, and counted myself amongst the glorious knights of old; having even the unspeakable presumption—my shame and self-condemnation at the memory of it are such, that I write it as the only and sorest penance I can perform—to think of myself (will the world believe it?) as side by side with Sir Galahad![4] Scarcely had the thought been born in my mind, when, approaching me from the left, through the trees, I espied[5] a resplendent[6] knight, of mighty size, whose armour seemed to shine of itself, without the sun. When he drew near, I was astonished to see that this armour was like my own; nay, I could trace, line for line, the correspondence of the inlaid silver to the device on my own. His horse, too, was like mine in colour, form, and motion; save that, like his rider, he was greater and fiercer than his counterpart. The knight rode with beaver[7] up. As he halted right opposite to me in the narrow path, barring my way, I saw the reflection of my countenance in the centre plate of shining steel on his breastplate. Above it rose the same face—his face—only, as I have said, larger and fiercer. I was bewildered. I could not help feeling some admiration of him, but it was mingled with a dim conviction that he was evil, and that I ought to fight with him.

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[1] Jean Paul (Johann Paul Friedrich Richter, 1763-1825) was a German writer. *Titan* (1800-1803) is a four-volume novel in the *Bildungsroman* (novel of education) tradition. Schoppe is the friend of Albano (the main character), who searches for balance in his life. Schoppe, however, is a cynic and pessimist and dies after he thinks he see his *doppelgänger*, but who is, in fact, his look-alike friend. Schoppe's tragic ending reinforces the death of the brothers in *Phantastes*.

[2] Cyril Tourneur (1575-1626) was an English dramatist, a contemporary of Shakespeare; Tourneur was also a soldier and politician. *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607), as its name implies, is a revenge tragedy, and comments on the battle to avenge the destruction by the giants that lead to the brothers' deaths. Literary critics now believe that the play was written by Thomas Middleton (1580-1627).

[3] Weapon for shooting arrows. Because of the medieval references throughout *Phantastes*, the youth may be making an English longbow, which is usually the height of the craftsperson in order to make the weapon more deadly.

"Let me pass," I said.

"When I will," he replied.

Something within me said: "Spear in rest, and ride at him! else thou art for ever a slave."

I tried, but my arm trembled so much, that I could not couch my lance. To tell the truth, I, who had overcome the giant, shook like a coward before this knight. He gave a scornful laugh, that echoed through the wood, turned his horse, and said, without looking round, "Follow me."

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[4] Sir Galahad, of Arthurian legend, was the illegitimate son of Lancelot and Elaine; Lancelot was (ironically) known for his purity and gallantry. Galahad is one of three knights in the legend to find the Holy Grail. Alfred Lord Tennyson included the poem "Lancelot and Elaine" (1859) in *Idylls of the King* (1859-1883). Tennyson was an acquaintance of MacDonald and borrowed books from him. *Phantastes* could have been an influence on Tennyson.

[5] To discover by spying or looking, to discern or catch sight of, and to see by chance or unexpectedly.

[6] Direct quote from OED: "shining, brilliant (*lit.* and *fig.*); splendid, sumptuous."

[7] Face-guard of a helmet.

I obeyed, abashed and stupefied. How long he led, and how long I followed, I cannot tell. "I never knew misery before," I said to myself. "Would that I had at least struck him, and had had my death-blow in return! Why, then, do I not call to him to wheel and defend himself? Alas! I know not why, but I cannot. One look from him would cow me like a beaten hound." I followed, and was silent.

At length we came to a dreary square tower, in the middle of a dense forest. It looked as if scarce a tree had been cut down to make room for it. Across the very door, diagonally, grew the stem of a tree, so large that there was just room to squeeze past it in order to enter. One miserable square hole in the roof was the only visible suggestion of a window. Turret or battlement,[8] or projecting masonry of any kind, it had none. Clear and smooth and massy, it rose from its base, and ended with a line straight and unbroken. The roof, carried to a centre from each of the four walls, rose slightly to the point where the rafters met. Round the base lay several little heaps of either bits of broken branches, withered and peeled, or half-whitened bones; I could not distinguish which. As I approached, the ground sounded hollow beneath my horse's hoofs. The knight took a great key from his pocket, and reaching past the stem of the tree, with some difficulty opened the door. "Dismount," he commanded. I obeyed. He turned my horse's head away from the tower, gave him a terrible blow with the flat side of his sword, and sent him madly tearing through the forest.

"Now," said he, "enter, and take your companion with you."

I looked round: knight and horse had vanished, and behind me lay the horrible shadow. I entered, for I could not help myself; and the shadow followed me. I had a terrible conviction that the knight and he were one. The door closed behind me.

Now I was indeed in pitiful plight. There was literally nothing in the tower but my shadow and me. The walls rose right up to the roof; in which, as I had seen from without, there was one little square opening. This I now knew to be the only window the tower possessed. I sat down on the floor, in listless wretchedness. I think I must have fallen asleep, and have slept for hours; for I suddenly became aware of existence, in observing that the moon was shining through the hole in the roof. As she rose higher and higher, her light crept down the wall over me, till at last it shone right upon my head. Instantaneously the walls of the tower seemed to vanish away like a mist. I sat beneath a beech, on the edge of a forest, and the open country lay, in the moonlight, for miles and miles around me, spotted with glimmering houses and spires[9] and towers. I thought with myself, "Oh, joy! it was only a dream; the horrible narrow waste is gone, and I wake beneath a beech-tree, perhaps one that loves me, and I can go where I will." I rose, as I thought, and walked about, and did what I would, but ever kept near the tree; for always, and, of course, since my meeting with the woman of the beech-tree far more than ever, I loved that tree. So the night wore on. I waited for the sun to rise, before I could venture to renew my journey. But as soon as the first faint light of the dawn appeared, instead of shining upon me from the eye of the morning, it stole like a fainting ghost through the little square hole above my head; and the walls came out as the light grew, and the glorious night was swallowed up of the hateful day. The long dreary day passed. My shadow lay black on the floor. I felt no hunger, no need of food. The night came. The moon shone. I watched her light slowly descending the wall, as I might have watched, adown the sky, the long, swift approach of a helping angel. Her rays touched me, and I was free. Thus night after night passed away. I should have died but for this. Every night the conviction returned, that I was free. Every morning I sat wretchedly disconsolate. At length, when the course of the moon no longer permitted her beams to touch me, the night was dreary as the day. When I slept, I was somewhat consoled by my dreams; but all the time I dreamed, I knew that I was only dreaming. But one night, at length, the moon, a mere shred of pallor,[10] scattered a few thin ghostly rays upon me; and I think I fell asleep and dreamed. I sat in an autumn night before the vintage, on a hill overlooking my own castle. My heart sprang with joy. Oh, to be a child again, innocent, fearless, without shame or desire! I walked down to the castle. All were in consternation at my absence. My sisters were weeping for my loss. They sprang up and clung to me, with incoherent cries, as I entered. My old friends came flocking round me. A gray light shone on the roof of the hall. It was the light of the dawn shining through the square window of my tower. More earnestly than ever, I longed for freedom after this dream; more drearily than ever, crept on the next wretched day. I measured by the sunbeams, caught through the little window in the trap of my tower, how it went by, waiting only for the dreams of the night.

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[8] A smaller tower (turret) connected to a larger structure. A battlement is a defensive structure to protect troops and is built of the top of a wall or tower. See notes 8 and 13 from chapter 20.

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[9] Tall structure on top of a tower that ends into a slender point; in particular the steeple of a cathedral or church.

[10] The moon is a sliver (a shred) and pale, dim.

About noon, I started as if something foreign to all my senses and all my experience, had suddenly invaded me; yet it was only the voice of a woman singing. My whole frame quivered with joy, surprise, and the sensation of the unforeseen. Like a living soul, like an incarnation of Nature, the song entered my prison-house. Each tone folded its wings, and laid itself, like a caressing bird, upon my heart. It bathed me like a sea; inwrapt me like an odorous vapour; entered my soul like a long draught of clear spring-water; shone upon me like essential sunlight; soothed me like a mother's voice and hand. Yet, as the clearest forest-well tastes sometimes of the bitterness of decayed leaves, so to my weary, prisoned heart, its cheerfulness had a sting of cold, and its tenderness unmanned me with the faintness of long-departed joys. I wept half-bitterly, half-luxuriously; but not long. I dashed away the tears, ashamed of a weakness which I thought I had abandoned. Ere I knew, I had walked to the door, and seated myself with my ear against it, in order to catch every syllable of the revelation from the unseen outer world. And now I heard each word distinctly. The singer seemed to be standing or sitting near the tower, for the sounds indicated no change of place. The song was something like this:—

The sun, like a golden knot on high,
Gathers the glories of the sky,
And binds them into a shining tent,
Roofing the world with the firmament.[11]
And through the pavilion[12] the rich winds blow,
And through the pavilion the waters go.
And the birds for joy, and the trees for prayer,
Bowing their heads in the sunny air,
And for thoughts, the gently talking springs,
That come from the centre with secret things—
All make a music, gentle and strong,
Bound by the heart into one sweet song.
And amidst them all, the mother Earth
Sits with the children of her birth;
She tendeth them all, as a mother hen
Her little ones round her, twelve or ten:
Oft she sitteth, with hands on knee,
Idle with love for her family.

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[11] The sky, or vault of heaven.

[12] Tent that rises in the middle to a central point.

Go forth to her from the dark and the dust,
And weep beside her, if weep thou must;
If she may not hold thee to her breast,
Like a weary infant, that cries for rest;
At least she will press thee to her knee,
And tell a low, sweet tale to thee,
Till the hue to thy cheek and the light to thine eye,
Strength to thy limbs, and courage high
To thy fainting heart, return amain,[13]
And away to work thou goest again.
From the narrow desert, O man of pride,
Come into the house, so high and wide.

Hardly knowing what I did, I opened the door. Why had I not done so before? I do not know.

At first I could see no one; but when I had forced myself past the tree which grew across the entrance, I saw, seated on the ground, and leaning against the tree, with her back to my prison, a beautiful woman. Her countenance seemed known to me, and yet unknown. She looked up at me and smiled, when I made my appearance.

"Ah! were you the prisoner there? I am very glad I have wiled[14] you out."

"Do you know me then?"

"Do you not know me? But you hurt me, and that, I suppose, makes it easy for a man to forget. You broke my globe. Yet I thank you. Perhaps I owe you many thanks for breaking it. I took the pieces, all black, and wet with crying over them, to the Fairy Queen.[15] There was no music and no light in them now. But she took them from me, and laid them aside; and made me go to sleep in a great hall of white, with black pillars, and many red curtains. When I woke in the morning, I went to her, hoping to have my globe again, whole and sound; but she sent me away without it, and I have not seen it since. Nor do I care for it now. I have something so much better. I do not need the globe to play to me; for I can sing. I could not sing at all before. Now I go about everywhere through Fairy Land, singing till my heart is like to break, just like my globe, for very joy at my own songs. And wherever I go, my songs do good, and deliver people. And now I have delivered you, and I am so happy."

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[13] With full force or energy.

[14] To draw attention to by cunning; to charm or divert attention away from something unpleasant.

[15] The Fairy Queen, also known as Titania or Mab in folklore, is the ruler of the fairies. Shakespeare in *A Midsummers Night's Dream* (1605) popularizes Titania, while Edmund Spenser in *The Faerie Queene* (1590) names her Gloriana.

She ceased, and the tears came into her eyes.

All this time, I had been gazing at her; and now fully recognised the face of the child, glorified in the countenance of the woman. I was ashamed and humbled before her; but a great weight was lifted from my thoughts. I knelt before her, and thanked her, and begged her to forgive me.

"Rise, rise," she said; "I have nothing to forgive; I thank you. But now I must be gone, for I do not know how many may be waiting for me, here and there, through the dark forests; and they cannot come out till I come."

She rose, and with a smile and a farewell, turned and left me. I dared not ask her to stay; in fact, I could hardly speak to her. Between her and me, there was a great gulf. She was uplifted by sorrow and well-doing, into a region I could hardly hope ever to enter. I watched her departure, as one watches a sunset. She went like a radiance through the dark wood, which was henceforth bright to me, from simply knowing that such a creature was in it. She was bearing the sun to the unsunned spots. The light and the music of her broken globe were now in her heart and her brain. As she went, she sang; and I caught these few words of her song; and the tones seemed to linger and wind about the trees after she had disappeared:—

Thou goest thine, and I go mine—
  Many ways we wend;
Many days, and many ways,
  Ending in one end.

Many a wrong, and its curing song;
  Many a road, and many an inn;
Room to roam, but only one home
  For all the world to win.[16]

And so she vanished. With a sad heart, soothed by humility, and the knowledge of her peace and gladness, I bethought me what now I should do. First, I must leave the tower far behind me, lest, in some evil moment, I might be once more caged within its horrible walls.

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[16] This poem has had relevance in popular culture. The Irish folk-rock band The Waterboys titled their 1990 album *Room to Roam*, with one song "Room to Roam" setting MacDonald's poem to music. See John Pennington's "George MacDonald as Rock Star?" in *North Wind: A Journal of George MacDonald Studies*, volume 25, 2006.

But it was ill walking in my heavy armour; and besides I had now no right to the golden spurs and the resplendent mail, fitly dulled with long neglect. I might do for a squire;[17] but I honoured knighthood too highly, to call myself any longer one of the noble brotherhood. I stripped off all my armour, piled it under the tree, just where the lady had been seated, and took my unknown way, eastward through the woods. Of all my weapons, I carried only a short axe in my hand. Then first I knew the delight of being lowly; of saying to myself, "I am what I am, nothing more." "I have failed," I said; "I have lost myself—would it had been my shadow." I looked round: the shadow was nowhere to be seen. Ere long, I learned that it was not myself, but only my shadow, that I had lost. I learned that it is better, a thousand-fold, for a proud man to fall and be humbled, than to hold up his head in his pride and fancied innocence. I learned that he that will be a hero, will barely be a man; that he that will be nothing but a doer of his work, is sure of his manhood. In nothing was my ideal lowered, or dimmed, or grown less precious; I only saw it too plainly, to set myself for a moment beside it. Indeed, my ideal soon became my life; whereas, formerly, my life had consisted in a vain attempt to behold, if not my ideal in myself, at least myself in my ideal. Now, however, I took, at first, what perhaps was a mistaken pleasure, in despising and degrading myself. Another self seemed to arise, like a white spirit from a dead man, from the dumb and trampled self of the past. Doubtless, this self must again die and be buried, and again, from its tomb, spring a winged child; but of this my history as yet bears not the record. Self will come to life even in the slaying of self; but there is ever something deeper and stronger than it, which will emerge at last from the unknown abysses of the soul: will it be as a solemn gloom, burning with eyes? or a clear morning after the rain? or a smiling child, that finds itself nowhere, and everywhere?

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[17] Young man who attends to or serves a knight.

Chapter XXIII

High erected thought, seated in a heart of courtesy.
SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.[1]

A sweet attractive kinde of grace,
  A full assurance given by lookes,
Continuall comfort in a face,
  The lineaments of Gospell bookes.
MATTHEW ROYDON, on *Sir Philip Sidney.*[2]

I had not gone far, for I had but just lost sight of the hated tower, when a voice of another sort, sounding near or far, as the trees permitted or intercepted its passage, reached me. It was a full, deep, manly voice, but withal[3] clear and melodious. Now it burst on the ear with a sudden swell, and anon, dying away as suddenly, seemed to come to me across a great space. Nevertheless, it drew nearer; till, at last, I could distinguish the words of the song, and get transient glimpses of the singer, between the columns of the trees. He came nearer, dawning upon me like a growing thought. He was a knight, armed from head to heel, mounted upon a strange-looking beast, whose form I could not understand. The words which I heard him sing were like these:—

Heart be stout,
  And eye be true;
Good blade out!
  And ill shall rue.

Courage, horse!
  Thou lackst no skill;
Well thy force

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[1] Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1583) was an Elizabethan courtier, soldier, and poet. The quotation derives from *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1590), and sets out Sidney's definition of a gentleman. Late in his writing career, MacDonald published a collection of excerpts from Sidney: *A Cabinet of Gems, Cut and Polished by Sir Philip Sidney* (1892). MacDonald lectured on Sidney as early as 1854.

[2] Matthew Roydon (1580-1622), Elizabethan poet and friend of Sidney's. In 1593, Roydon published his elegy for Sidney: "Astrophel: An Elegy, or Friend's Passion, for His Astrophill." MacDonald quotes lines 103-106. "The lineaments of Gospell bookes," suggests that Sidney's face exhibited a spirituality of a kind found in the four gospels of the New Testament.

[3] In addition or as well.

Hath matched my will.

For the foe,
With fiery breath,
At a blow,
Is still in death.

Gently, horse!
Tread fearlessly;
'Tis his corse[4]
That burdens thee.

The sun's eye
Is fierce at noon;
Thou and I
Will rest full soon.

And new strength
New work will meet;
Till, at length,
Long rest is sweet.

And now horse and rider had arrived near enough for me to see, fastened by the long neck to the hinder part of the saddle, and trailing its hideous length on the ground behind, the body of a great dragon.[5] It was no wonder that, with such a drag at his heels, the horse could make but slow progress, notwithstanding his evident dismay. The horrid, serpent-like head, with its black tongue, forked with red, hanging out of its jaws, dangled against the horse's side. Its neck was covered with long blue hair; its sides with scales of green and gold. Its back was of corrugated skin, of a purple hue. Its belly was similar in nature, but its colour was leaden, dashed with blotches of livid[6] blue. Its skinny, bat-like wings and its tail were of a dull grey. It was strange to see how so many gorgeous colours, so many curving lines, and such beautiful things as wings and hair and scales, combined to form the horrible creature, intense in ugliness.

The knight was passing me with a salutation; but, as I walked towards him, he reined up, and I stood by his stirrup. When I came near him, I saw to my surprise and pleasure likewise, although a sudden pain, like a birth of fire, sprang up in my heart, that it was the knight of the soiled armour, whom I knew before, and whom I had seen in the vision, with the lady of the marble. But I could have thrown my arms around him, because she loved him. This discovery only strengthened the resolution I had formed, before I recognised him, of offering myself to the knight, to wait upon him as a squire, for he seemed to be unattended. I made my request in as few words as possible. He hesitated for a moment, and looked at me thoughtfully. I saw that he suspected who I was, but that he continued uncertain of his suspicion. No doubt he was soon convinced of its truth; but all the time I was with him, not a word crossed his lips with reference to what he evidently concluded I wished to leave unnoticed, if not to keep concealed.

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[4] Archaic form of *corpse*.

[5] Dragons were standard fare in medieval romances, the most famous battle being between St. George and the dragon.

[6] Bluish grey colour.

"Squire and knight should be friends," said he: "can you take me by the hand?" And he held out the great gauntleted right hand. I grasped it willingly and strongly. Not a word more was said. The knight gave the sign to his horse, which again began his slow march, and I walked beside and a little behind.

We had not gone very far before we arrived at a little cottage; from which, as we drew near, a woman rushed out with the cry:

"My child! my child! have you found my child?"

"I have found her," replied the knight, "but she is sorely hurt. I was forced to leave her with the hermit, as I returned. You will find her there, and I think she will get better. You see I have brought you a present. This wretch will not hurt you again." And he undid the creature's neck, and flung the frightful burden down by the cottage-door.

The woman was now almost out of sight in the wood; but the husband stood at the door, with speechless thanks in his face.

"You must bury the monster," said the knight. "If I had arrived a moment later, I should have been too late. But now you need not fear, for such a creature as this very rarely appears, in the same part, twice during a life-time."

"Will you not dismount and rest you, Sir Knight?" said the peasant, who had, by this time, recovered himself a little.

"That I will, thankfully," said he; and, dismounting, he gave the reins to me, and told me to unbridle the horse, and lead him into the shade. "You need not tie him up," he added; "he will not run away."

When I returned, after obeying his orders, and entered the cottage, I saw the knight seated, without his helmet, and talking most familiarly with the simple host. I stood at the open door for a moment, and, gazing at him, inwardly justified the white lady in preferring him to me. A nobler countenance I never saw. Loving-kindness beamed from every line of his face. It seemed as if he would repay himself for the late arduous combat, by indulging in all the gentleness of a womanly heart. But when the talk ceased for a moment, he seemed to fall into a reverie. Then the exquisite curves of the upper lip vanished. The lip was lengthened and compressed at the same moment. You could have told that, within the lips, the teeth were firmly closed. The whole face grew stern and determined, all but fierce; only the eyes burned on like a holy sacrifice, uplift on a granite rock.

The woman entered, with her mangled child in her arms. She was pale as her little burden. She gazed, with a wild love and despairing tenderness, on the still, all but dead face, white and clear from loss of blood and terror.

The knight rose. The light that had been confined to his eyes, now shone from his whole countenance. He took the little thing in his arms, and, with the mother's help, undressed her, and looked to her wounds. The tears flowed down his face as he did so. With tender hands he bound them up, kissed the pale cheek, and gave her back to her mother. When he went home, all his tale would be of the grief and joy of the parents; while to me, who had looked on, the gracious countenance of the armed man, beaming from the panoply of steel,[7] over the seemingly dead child, while the powerful hands turned it and shifted it, and bound it, if possible even more gently than the mother's, formed the centre of the story.

After we had partaken of the best they could give us, the knight took his leave, with a few parting instructions to the mother, as to how she should treat the child.

I brought the knight his steed, held the stirrup while he mounted, and then followed him through the wood. The horse, delighted to be free of his hideous load, bounded beneath the weight of man and armour, and could hardly be restrained from galloping on. But the knight made him time his powers to mine, and so we went on for an hour or two. Then the knight dismounted, and compelled me to get into the saddle, saying: "Knight and squire must share the labour."

Holding by the stirrup, he walked along by my side, heavily clad as he was, with apparent ease. As we went, he led a conversation, in which I took what humble part my sense of my condition would permit me.

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[7] "Panoply of steel" refers to armour.

"Somehow or other," said he, "notwithstanding the beauty of this country of Faerie, in which we are, there is much that is wrong in it. If there are great splendours, there are corresponding horrors; heights and depths; beautiful women and awful fiends; noble men and weaklings. All a man has to do, is to better what he can. And if he will settle it with himself, that even renown and success are in themselves of no great value, and be content to be defeated, if so be that the fault is not his; and so go to his work with a cool brain and a strong will, he will get it done; and fare none the worse in the end, that he was not burdened with provision and precaution."

"But he will not always come off well," I ventured to say.

"Perhaps not," rejoined the knight, "in the individual act; but the result of his lifetime will content him."

"So it will fare with you, doubtless," thought I; "but for me—"

Venturing to resume the conversation after a pause, I said, hesitatingly:

"May I ask for what the little beggar-girl wanted your aid, when she came to your castle to find you?"

He looked at me for a moment in silence, and then said—

"I cannot help wondering how you know of that; but there is something about you quite strange enough to entitle you to the privilege of the country; namely, to go unquestioned. I, however, being only a man, such as you see me, am ready to tell you anything you like to ask me, as far as I can. The little beggar-girl came into the hall where I was sitting, and told me a very curious story, which I can only recollect very vaguely, it was so peculiar. What I can recall is, that she was sent to gather wings. As soon as she had gathered a pair of wings for herself, she was to fly away, she said, to the country she came from; but where that was, she could give no information. She said she had to beg her wings from the butterflies and moths; and wherever she begged, no one refused her. But she needed a great many of the wings of butterflies and moths to make a pair for her; and so she had to wander about day after day, looking for butterflies, and night after night, looking for moths; and then she begged for their wings. But the day before, she had come into a part of the forest, she said, where there were multitudes of splendid butterflies flitting about, with wings which were just fit to make the eyes in the shoulders of hers; and she knew she could have as many of them as she liked for the asking; but as soon as she began to beg, there came a great creature right up to her, and threw her down, and walked over her. When she got up, she saw the wood was full of these beings stalking about, and seeming to have nothing to do with each other. As soon as ever she began to beg, one of them walked over her; till at last in dismay, and in growing horror of the senseless creatures, she had run away to look for somebody to help her. I asked her what they were like. She said, like great men, made of wood, without knee- or elbow-joints, and without any noses or mouths or eyes in their faces. I laughed at the little maiden, thinking she was making child's game of me; but, although she burst out laughing too, she persisted in asserting the truth of her story.

"'Only come, knight, come and see; I will lead you.'

"So I armed myself, to be ready for anything that might happen, and followed the child; for, though I could make nothing of her story, I could see she was a little human being in need of some help or other. As she walked before me, I looked attentively at her. Whether or not it was from being so often knocked down and walked over, I could not tell, but her clothes were very much torn, and in several places her white skin was peeping through. I thought she was hump-backed; but on looking more closely, I saw, through the tatters of her frock—do not laugh at me—a bunch on each shoulder, of the most gorgeous colours. Looking yet more closely, I saw that they were of the shape of folded wings, and were made of all kinds of butterfly-wings and moth-wings, crowded together like the feathers on the individual butterfly pinion; but, like them, most beautifully arranged, and producing a perfect harmony of colour and shade. I could now more easily believe the rest of her story; especially as I saw, every now and then, a certain heaving motion in the wings, as if they longed to be uplifted and outspread. But beneath her scanty garments complete wings could not be concealed, and indeed, from her own story, they were yet unfinished.

"After walking for two or three hours (how the little girl found her way, I could not imagine), we came to a part of the forest, the very air of which was quivering with the motions of multitudes of resplendent butterflies; as gorgeous in colour, as if the eyes of peacocks' feathers had taken to flight, but of infinite variety of hue and form, only that the appearance of some kind of eye on each wing predominated. 'There they are, there they are!' cried the child, in a tone of victory mingled with terror. Except for this tone, I should have thought she referred to the butterflies, for I could see nothing else. But at that moment an enormous butterfly, whose wings had great eyes of blue surrounded by confused cloudy heaps of more dingy colouring, just like a break in the clouds on a stormy day towards evening, settled near us. The child instantly began murmuring: 'Butterfly, butterfly, give me your wings';

when, the moment after she fell to the ground, and began crying as if hurt. I drew my sword and heaved a great blow in the direction in which the child had fallen. It struck something, and instantly the most grotesque imitation of a man became visible. You see this Fairy Land is full of oddities and all sorts of incredibly ridiculous things, which a man is compelled to meet and treat as real existences, although all the time he feels foolish for doing so. This being, if being it could be called, was like a block of wood roughly hewn into the mere outlines of a man; and hardly so, for it had but head, body, legs, and arms—the head without a face, and the limbs utterly formless. I had hewn off one of its legs, but the two portions moved on as best they could, quite independent of each other; so that I had done no good. I ran after it, and clove it in twain from the head downwards; but it could not be convinced that its vocation was not to walk over people; for, as soon as the little girl began her begging again, all three parts came bustling up; and if I had not interposed my weight between her and them, she would have been trampled again under them.[8] I saw that something else must be done. If the wood was full of the creatures, it would be an endless work to chop them so small that they could do no injury; and then, besides, the parts would be so numerous, that the butterflies would be in danger from the drift of flying chips. I served this one so, however; and then told the girl to beg again, and point out the direction in which one was coming. I was glad to find, however, that I could now see him myself, and wondered how they could have been invisible before. I would not allow him to walk over the child; but while I kept him off, and she began begging again, another appeared; and it was all I could do, from the weight of my armour, to protect her from the stupid, persevering efforts of the two. But suddenly the right plan occurred to me. I tripped one of them up, and, taking him by the legs, set him up on his head, with his heels against a tree. I was delighted to find he could not move. Meantime the poor child was walked over by the other, but it was for the last time. Whenever one appeared, I followed the same plan—tripped him up and set him on his head; and so the little beggar was able to gather her wings without any trouble, which occupation she continued for several hours in my company."

"What became of her?" I asked.

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[8] No sense, no feeling. These wooden men are insensitive boors, and they exemplify MacDonald's maxim: "The real slave is he who does not seek to be a child, who does not desire to end his slavery; who looks upon the claim of the child as presumptuous . . ." (*Unspoken Sermons*, Third Series, 1889, 87-88).

"I took her home with me to my castle, and she told me all her story; but it seemed to me, all the time, as if I were hearing a child talk in its sleep. I could not arrange her story in my mind at all, although it seemed to leave hers in some certain order of its own. My wife—"

Here the knight checked himself, and said no more. Neither did I urge the conversation farther.

Thus we journeyed for several days, resting at night in such shelter as we could get; and when no better was to be had, lying in the forest under some tree, on a couch of old leaves.

I loved the knight more and more. I believe never squire served his master with more care and joyfulness than I. I tended his horse; I cleaned his armour; my skill in the craft enabled me to repair it when necessary; I watched his needs; and was well repaid for all, by the love itself which I bore him.

"This," I said to myself, "is a true man. I will serve him, and give him all worship, seeing in him the imbodiment of what I would fain[9] become. If I cannot be noble myself, I will yet be servant to his nobleness." He, in return, soon showed me such signs of friendship and respect, as made my heart glad; and I felt that, after all, mine would be no lost life, if I might wait on him to the world's end, although no smile but his should greet me, and no one but him should say, "Well done! he was a good servant!" at last.[10] But I burned to do something more for him than the ordinary routine of a squire's duty permitted.

One afternoon, we began to observe an appearance of roads in the wood. Branches had been cut down, and openings made, where footsteps had worn no path below. These indications increased as we passed on; till, at length, we came into a long, narrow avenue, formed by felling the trees in its line, as the remaining roots evidenced. At some little distance, on both hands, we observed signs of similar avenues, which appeared to converge with ours, towards one spot. Along these, we indistinctly saw several forms moving, which seemed, with ourselves, to approach the common centre. Our path brought us, at last, up to a wall of yew trees, growing close together, and intertwining their branches so, that nothing could be seen beyond it. An opening was cut in it like a door, and all the wall was trimmed smooth and perpendicular. The knight dismounted, and waited till I had provided for his horse's comfort; upon which we entered the place together.

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[9] Archaic word for gladly or willingly.

[10] Echoes of Matthew 25:23.

It was a great space, bare of trees, and enclosed by four walls of yew, similar to that through which we had entered. These trees grew to a very great height, and did not divide from each other till close to the top, where their summits formed a row of conical battlements[11] all around the walls. The space contained was a parallelogram[12] of great length. Along each of the two longer sides of the interior, were ranged three ranks of men, in white robes, standing silent and solemn, each with a sword by his side, although the rest of his costume and bearing was more priestly than soldierly.[13] For some distance inwards, the space between these opposite rows was filled with a company of men and women and children, in holiday attire. The looks of all were directed inwards, towards the further end. Far beyond the crowd, in a long avenue, seeming to narrow in the distance, went the long rows of the white-robed men. On what the attention of the multitude was fixed, we could not tell, for the sun had set before we arrived, and it was growing dark within. It grew darker and darker. The multitude waited in silence. The stars began to shine down into the enclosure, and they grew brighter and larger every moment. A wind arose, and swayed the pinnacles of the tree-tops; and made a strange sound, half like music, half like moaning, through the close branches and leaves of the tree-walls. A young girl who stood beside me, clothed in the same dress as the priests, bowed her head, and grew pale with awe.

The knight whispered to me, "How solemn it is! Surely they wait to hear the voice of a prophet. There is something good near!"

But I, though somewhat shaken by the feeling expressed by my master, yet had an unaccountable conviction that here was something bad. So I resolved to be keenly on the watch for what should follow.

Suddenly a great star, like a sun, appeared high in the air over the temple, illuminating it throughout; and a great song arose from the men in white, which went rolling round and round the building, now receding to the end, and now approaching, down the other side, the place where we stood. For some of the singers were regularly ceasing, and the next to them as regularly taking up the song; so that it crept onwards, with gradations produced by changes which could not themselves be detected, for only a few of those who were singing ceased at the same moment. The song paused; and I saw a company of six of the white-robed men[14] walk up the centre of the human avenue, surrounding a youth gorgeously attired beneath his robe of white, and wearing a chaplet of flowers[15] on his head. I followed them closely, with my keenest observation; and, by accompanying their slow progress with my eyes, I was able to perceive more clearly what took place when they arrived at the other end. I knew that my sight was so much more keen than that of most people, that I had good reason to suppose I should see more than the rest could, at such a distance. At the farther end, a throne stood upon a platform, high above the heads of the surrounding priests. To this platform I saw the company begin to ascend, apparently by an inclined plane or gentle slope. The throne itself was elevated again, on a kind of square pedestal, to the top of which led a flight of steps. On the throne sat a majestic-looking figure, whose posture seemed to indicate a mixture of pride and benignity,[16] as he looked down on the multitude below. The company ascended to the foot of the throne, where they all kneeled for some minutes; then they rose and passed round to the side of the pedestal upon which the throne stood. Here they crowded close behind the youth, putting him in the foremost place; and one of them opened a door in the pedestal, for the youth to enter. I was sure I saw him shrink back, and those crowding behind push him in. Then, again, arose a burst of song from the multitude in white, which lasted some time. When it ceased, a new company of seven commenced its march up the centre. As they advanced, I looked up at my master: his noble countenance was full of reverence and awe. Incapable of evil himself, he could scarcely suspect it in another, much less in a multitude such as this, and surrounded with such appearances of solemnity. I was certain it was the really grand accompaniments that overcame him; that the stars overhead, the dark towering tops of the yew-trees, and the wind that, like an unseen spirit, sighed through their branches, bowed his spirit to the belief, that in all these ceremonies lay some great mystical meaning, which, his humility told him, his ignorance prevented him from understanding.[17]

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[11] A battlement is a parapet at the top of a fortification's wall with squared openings to allow for soldiers to shoot.

[12] Four-sided shape with each side being parallel to the one opposite, although the sides do not have to be rectangular.

[13] "More priestly than soldierly" suggests the pairing of dogma and force, fanaticism and power, as if Anodos and the Knight have come across some evil cult.

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[14] Members of the strange and malevolent cult, who act here as soldiers and priests set to surround the acolyte who will serve as a sacrifice in this terrible ceremony.

[15] Wreath of flowers. A chaplet may also refer to a string of prayer beads. Here the chaplet indicates that the young man is special, selected for some mysterious ritual, in this case an unpleasant ritual sacrifice.

[16] Goodness or kindness. Here the goodness is false, a mask for evil intent.

[17] Compare the ritual enacted here with that in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Young

More convinced than before, that there was evil here, I could not endure that my master should be deceived; that one like him, so pure and noble, should respect what, if my suspicions were true, was worse than the ordinary deceptions of priestcraft. I could not tell how far he might be led to countenance, and otherwise support their doings, before he should find cause to repent bitterly of his error. I watched the new procession yet more keenly, if possible, than the former. This time, the central figure was a girl; and, at the close, I observed, yet more indubitably, the shrinking back, and the crowding push. What happened to the victims, I never learned; but I had learned enough, and I could bear it no longer. I stooped, and whispered to the young girl who stood by me, to lend me her white garment. I wanted it, that I might not be entirely out of keeping with the solemnity, but might have at least this help to passing unquestioned. She looked up, half-amused and half-bewildered, as if doubting whether I was in earnest or not. But in her perplexity, she permitted me to unfasten it, and slip it down from her shoulders. I easily got possession of it; and, sinking down on my knees in the crowd, I rose apparently in the habit[18] of one of the worshippers.

Giving my battle-axe to the girl, to hold in pledge for the return of her stole,[19] for I wished to test the matter unarmed, and, if it was a man that sat upon the throne, to attack him with hands bare, as I supposed his must be, I made my way through the crowd to the front, while the singing yet continued, desirous of reaching the platform while it was unoccupied by any of the priests. I was permitted to walk up the long avenue of white robes unmolested, though I saw questioning looks in many of the faces as I passed. I presume my coolness aided my passage; for I felt quite indifferent as to my own fate; not feeling, after the late events of my history, that I was at all worth taking care of; and enjoying, perhaps, something of an evil satisfaction, in the revenge I was thus taking upon the self which had fooled me so long. When I arrived on the platform, the song had just ceased, and I felt as if all were looking towards me. But instead of kneeling at its foot, I walked right up the stairs to the throne, laid hold of a great wooden image that seemed to sit upon it, and tried to hurl it from its seat. In this I failed at first, for I found it firmly fixed. But in dread lest, the first shock of amazement passing away, the guards would rush upon me before I had

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Goodman Brown" (1835).

[18] Long garment worn by a member of a religious order.

[19] Woman's shawl worn over the shoulders.

effected my purpose, I strained with all my might; and, with a noise as of the cracking, and breaking, and tearing of rotten wood, something gave way, and I hurled the image down the steps. Its displacement revealed a great hole in the throne, like the hollow of a decayed tree, going down apparently a great way. But I had no time to examine it, for, as I looked into it, up out of it rushed a great brute, like a wolf, but twice the size, and tumbled me headlong with itself, down the steps of the throne. As we fell, however, I caught it by the throat, and the moment we reached the platform, a struggle commenced, in which I soon got uppermost, with my hand upon its throat, and knee upon its heart. But now arose a wild cry of wrath and revenge and rescue. A universal hiss of steel, as every sword was swept from its scabbard, seemed to tear the very air in shreds. I heard the rush of hundreds towards the platform on which I knelt. I only tightened my grasp of the brute's throat. His eyes were already starting from his head, and his tongue was hanging out. My anxious hope was, that, even after they had killed me, they would be unable to undo my gripe[20] of his throat, before the monster was past breathing. I therefore threw all my will, and force, and purpose, into the grasping hand. I remember no blow. A faintness came over me, and my consciousness departed.

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[20] Archaic form of *grip*.

Chapter XXIV

We are ne'er like angels till our passions die.
DEKKER.[1]

This wretched *Inn*, where we scarce stay to bait,
We call our *Dwelling-Place:*
We call one *Step A Race:*
But angels in their full enlightened state,
Angels, who *Live*, and know what 'tis to *Be*,
Who all the nonsense of our language see,
Who speak *things*, and our *words*, their ill-drawn *pictures*, scorn,
When we, by a foolish figure, say,
Behold an old man dead! then they
Speak properly, and cry, *Behold a man-child born!*
COWLEY.[2]

I was dead, and right content.[3] I lay in my coffin, with my hands folded in peace. The knight, and the lady I loved, wept over me. Her tears fell on my face.

"Ah!" said the knight, "I rushed amongst them like a madman. I hewed them down like brushwood. Their swords battered on me like hail, but hurt me not. I cut a lane through to my friend. He was dead. But he had throttled the monster, and I had to cut the handful out of its throat, before I could disengage and carry off his body. They dared not molest me as I brought him back."

"He has died well," said the lady.

My spirit rejoiced. They left me to my repose. I felt as if a cool hand had been laid upon my heart, and had stilled it. My soul was like a summer evening, after a heavy fall of rain, when the drops are yet glistening on the trees in the last rays of the down-going sun, and the wind of the twilight has begun to blow. The hot fever of life had gone by, and I breathed the clear mountain-air of the land of Death.[4] I had never dreamed of such blessedness. It was not that I had in any way ceased to be what I had been. The very fact that anything can die, implies the existence of something that cannot die; which must either take to itself another form,[5] as when the seed that is sown dies, and arises again; or, in conscious existence, may, perhaps, continue to lead a purely spiritual life. If my passions were dead, the souls of the passions, those essential mysteries of the spirit which had imbodied themselves in the passions, and had given to them all their glory and wonderment, yet lived, yet glowed, with a pure, undying fire. They rose above their vanishing earthly garments, and disclosed themselves angels of light. But oh, how beautiful beyond the old form! I lay thus for a time, and lived as it were an unradiating existence; my soul a motionless lake, that received all things and gave nothing back; satisfied in still contemplation, and spiritual consciousness.

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[1] Thomas Dekker (1572-1632) was a dramatist and writer of popular pamphlets describing London life. This line comes from the play *The Honest Whore, Part II* (1605 or 1606). *The Honest Whore, Part I*, a collaboration between Dekker and Thomas Middleton, was performed in 1604.

[2] Abraham Cowley (1618-1667) was an English poet famous by age 15. This passage comes from "Life," a poem in the collection *Pindarique Odes* (1656).

[3] That MacDonald would have Anodos, the first person narrator throughout *Phantastes*, die and continue to narrate his story further suggests the subversive nature of *Phantastes*. Realistic novels that were being published in the 1850s would not have had a dead narrator. Thematically, such a narrator complements MacDonald's belief that death is more life, so the narrative can easily accept the reality of a dead narrator.

Ere long, they bore me to my grave. Never tired child lay down in his white bed, and heard the sound of his playthings being laid aside for the night, with a more luxurious satisfaction of repose than I knew, when I felt the coffin settle on the firm earth, and heard the sound of the falling mould[6] upon its lid. It has not the same hollow rattle within the coffin, that it sends up to the edge of the grave. They buried me in no graveyard. They loved me too much for that, I thank them; but they laid me in the grounds of their own castle, amid many trees; where, as it was spring-time, were growing primroses, and blue bells, and all the families of the woods.

Now that I lay in her bosom, the whole earth, and each of her many births, was as a body to me, at my will. I seemed to feel the great heart of the mother beating into mine, and feeding me with her own life, her own essential being and nature. I heard the footsteps of my friends above, and they sent a thrill through my heart. I knew that the helpers had gone, and that the knight and the lady remained, and spoke low, gentle, tearful words of him who lay beneath the yet wounded sod. I rose into a single large primrose that grew by the edge of the grave, and from the window of its humble, trusting face, looked full in the countenance of the lady. I felt that I could manifest myself in the primrose; that it said a part of what I wanted to say; just as in the old time, I had used to betake myself to a song for the same end. The flower caught her eye. She stooped and plucked it, saying, "Oh, you beautiful creature!" and, lightly kissing it, put it in her bosom. It was the first kiss she had ever given me. But the flower soon began to wither, and I forsook it.

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[4] In ancient mythology the land of the dead is a physical space that one travels to and from. The most famous examples may be *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (18th century BCE) and Homer's *The Odyssey* (8th century BCE). MacDonald would also be influenced by Dante's *The Inferno* (1472). MacDonald channels Dante in *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871), which finds the young protagonist Diamond visiting and returning from the Back of the North Wind, a realm that is death.

[5] This passage reinforces MacDonald's notion that death is more life or transformation into something other, like what happens when the fairies die into earthly life earlier in the novel.

[6] Loose soil, clods of earth. Anodos, in his coffin, hears himself being buried.

It was evening. The sun was below the horizon; but his rosy beams yet illuminated a feathery cloud, that floated high above the world. I arose, I reached the cloud; and, throwing myself upon it, floated with it in sight of the sinking sun. He sank, and the cloud grew grey; but the greyness touched not my heart. It carried its rose-hue within; for now I could love without needing to be loved again. The moon came gliding up with all the past in her wan face. She changed my couch into a ghostly pallor, and threw all the earth below as to the bottom of a pale sea of dreams. But she could not make me sad. I knew now, that it is by loving, and not by being loved, that one can come nearest the soul of another; yea, that, where two love, it is the loving of each other, and not the being beloved by each other, that originates and perfects and assures their blessedness. I knew that love gives to him that loveth, power over any soul beloved, even if that soul know him not, bringing him inwardly close to that spirit; a power that cannot be but for good; for in proportion as selfishness intrudes, the love ceases, and the power which springs therefrom dies. Yet all love will, one day, meet with its return. All true love will, one day, behold its own image in the eyes of the beloved, and be humbly glad. This is possible in the realms of lofty Death.[7] "Ah! my friends," thought I, "how I will tend you, and wait upon you, and haunt you with my love."

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[7] While readers may find such passages highly didactic, MacDonald feels it important that he clarify a central theme in the novel—that love conquers all, and that this love will truly be experienced in death. Thus MacDonald can state explicitly what *Phantastes* has been depicting in its seemingly random series of events—that death leads to more life.

My floating chariot[8] bore me over a great city. Its faint dull sound steamed up into the air—a sound—how composed? "How many hopeless cries," thought I, "and how many mad shouts go to make up the tumult, here so faint where I float in eternal peace, knowing that they will one day be stilled in the surrounding calm, and that despair dies into infinite hope, and the seeming impossible there, is the law here! But, O pale-faced women, and gloomy-browed men, and forgotten children, how I will wait on you, and minister to you, and, putting my arms about you in the dark, think hope unto your hearts, when you fancy no one is near! Soon as my senses have all come back, and have grown accustomed to this new blessed life, I will be among you, with the love that healeth."

With this, a pang and a terrible shudder[9] went through me; a writhing as of death convulsed me; and I became once again conscious of a more limited, even a bodily and earthly life.

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[8] This floating chariot references Ezekiel's chariot of fire (Ezek. 1) and follows the mystical tradition of the Divine Chariot, surrounded by fiery angels, that ascends to heaven. The heavenly charioteer is Metatron. Philip Pullman undercuts the divinity of Metatron in *The Amber Spyglass* (2000), the final book in His Dark Materials series.

[9] Here MacDonald describes a reversal of the death sensation as he dies back into life, once again reinforcing a major theme of the novel that death is the beginning of more life.

Chapter XXV

Unser Leben ist kein Traum, aber es soll und wird vielleicht einer werden

NOVALIS.[1]

Our life is no dream; but it ought to become one, and perhaps will.

And on the ground, which is my modres gate,
I knocke with my staf, erlich and late,
And say to hire, Leve mother, let me in.
CHAUCER.—*The Pardoneres Tale.*[2]

Sinking from such a state of ideal bliss, into the world of shadows which again closed around and infolded me, my first dread was, not unnaturally, that my own shadow had found me again, and that my torture had commenced anew. It was a sad revulsion of feeling. This, indeed, seemed to correspond to what we think death is, before we die. Yet I felt within me a power of calm endurance to which I had hitherto been a stranger. For, in truth, that I should be able if only to think such things as I had been thinking, was an unspeakable delight. An hour of such peace made the turmoil of a life-time worth striving through.

I found myself lying in the open air, in the early morning, before sunrise. Over me rose the summer heaven, expectant of the sun. The clouds already saw him, coming from afar; and soon every dewdrop would rejoice in his individual presence within it. I lay motionless for a few minutes; and then slowly rose and looked about me. I was on the summit of a little hill; a valley lay beneath, and a range of mountains closed up the view upon that side. But, to my horror, across the valley, and up the height of the opposing mountains, stretched, from my very feet, a hugely expanding shade. There it lay, long and large, dark and mighty. I turned away with a sick despair; when lo! I beheld the sun just lifting his head above the eastern hill, and the shadow that fell from me, lay only where his beams fell not. I danced for joy. It was only the natural shadow, that goes with every man who walks in the sun. As he arose, higher and higher, the shadow-head sank down the side of the opposite hill, and crept in across the valley towards my feet.

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[1] Pseudonym of Georg Philipp Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenberg (1772- 1801), German poet and major influence on MacDonald. The quotation also appears at the end of MacDonald's final great fantasy, *Lilith* (1895). It derives from Novalis's *Das Allgemeine Brouillon (Universal Notebook)*, notes towards an unfinished encyclopedia.

[2] "The Pardoneres Tale" by Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400) is one of the twenty-four tales that constitute Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, written between 1387 and 1400. The story tells of three rash young men who set out to kill Death. They find him in the form of money hidden under a tree. The Old Man who tells the men where to find Death cannot himself die, although he wishes to do so. The lines quoted (729-731) are spoken by this old man who seeks to die.

Now that I was so joyously delivered from this fear, I saw and recognised the country around me. In the valley below, lay my own castle, and the haunts of my childhood were all about me. I hastened home. My sisters received me with unspeakable joy; but I suppose they observed some change in me, for a kind of respect, with a slight touch of awe in it, mingled with their joy, and made me ashamed. They had been in great distress about me. On the morning of my disappearance, they had found the floor of my room flooded; and, all that day, a wondrous and nearly impervious mist had hung about the castle and grounds. I had been gone, they told me, twenty-one days.[3] To me it seemed twenty-one years. Nor could I yet feel quite secure in my new experiences. When, at night, I lay down once more in my own bed, I did not feel at all sure that when I awoke, I should not find myself in some mysterious region of Fairy Land. My dreams were incessant and perturbed; but when I did awake, I saw clearly that I was in my own home.

My mind soon grew calm; and I began the duties of my new position, somewhat instructed, I hoped, by the adventures that had befallen me in Fairy Land. Could I translate the experience of my travels there, into common life? This was the question. Or must I live it all over again, and learn it all over again, in the other forms that belong to the world of men, whose experience yet runs parallel to that of Fairy Land? These questions I cannot yet answer. But I fear.

Even yet, I find myself looking round sometimes with anxiety, to see whether my shadow falls right away from the sun or no. I have never yet discovered any inclination to either side. And if I am not unfrequently sad, I yet cast no more of a shade on the earth, than most men who have lived in it as long as I. I have a strange feeling sometimes, that I am a ghost, sent into the world to minister to my fellow men, or, rather, to repair the wrongs I have already done. May the world be brighter for me, at least in those portions of it, where my darkness falls not.

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[3] "Twenty-one days." See note 2, chapter 1. Anodos's journey has been the same number of days as his age, indicating that his journey was a journey to maturity. He has now put away childish things and become a man.

Thus I, who set out to find my Ideal, came back rejoicing that I had lost my Shadow.

When the thought of the blessedness I experienced, after my death in Fairy Land, is too high for me to lay hold upon it and hope in it, I often think of the wise woman in the cottage, and of her solemn assurance that she knew something too good to be told. When I am oppressed by any sorrow or real perplexity, I often feel as if I had only left her cottage for a time, and would soon return out of the vision, into it again. Sometimes, on such occasions, I find myself, unconsciously almost, looking about for the mystic mark of red, with the vague hope of entering her door, and being comforted by her wise tenderness. I then console myself by saying: "I have come through the door of Dismay; and the way back from the world into which that has led me, is through my tomb. Upon that the red sign lies, and I shall find it one day, and be glad."

I will end my story with the relation of an incident which befell me a few days ago. I had been with my reapers,[4] and, when they ceased their work at noon, I had lain down under the shadow of a great, ancient beech-tree, that stood on the edge of the field. As I lay, with my eyes closed, I began to listen to the sound of the leaves overhead. At first, they made sweet inarticulate music alone; but, by and by, the sound seemed to begin to take shape, and to be gradually moulding itself into words; till, at last, I seemed able to distinguish these, half-dissolved in a little ocean of circumfluent[5] tones: "A great good is coming[6]—is coming—is coming to thee, Anodos"; and so over and over again. I fancied that the sound reminded me of the voice of the ancient woman, in the cottage that was four-square. I opened my eyes, and, for a moment, almost believed that I saw her face, with its many wrinkles and its young eyes, looking at me from between two hoary branches of the beech overhead. But when I looked more keenly, I saw only twigs and leaves, and the infinite sky, in tiny spots, gazing through between. Yet I know that good is coming to me—that good is always coming; though few have at all times the simplicity and the courage to believe it. What we call evil, is the only and best shape, which, for the person and his condition at the time, could be assumed by the best good. And so, *Farewell.*[7]

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[4] People who harvest a crop. Reaping and harvesting are suggestive of the end of the season or the end of time. See Matthew 9:37 and 13:30 and Revelation 6.6 and 14:15. Death is sometimes called the Grim Reaper.

[5] Flowing around, surrounding.

[6] This great good is probably what C. S. Lewis has identified in MacDonald's writing as a "certain quality of Death, *good* Death" (*George MacDonald: An Anthology*, 21). If MacDonald is a determinist, then his determinism is benign.

THE END

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[7] The Old English *faran* means to journey or travel, and so Anodos's parting word "farewell" is a hope for the reader to journey well, just, perhaps, as he has on the journey recounted in this book.

Appendix A: *Phantastes* and Novalis's Epigraph

In "A Literary Causerie: Phantastes," published in *The Academy* on March 31, 1906 (see Appendix B), Edward Stanley Robertson reflects upon *Phantastes* soon after MacDonald's death in 1905. Roberston, who initially read the 1858 edition without the Novalis passage translated, rereads the fantasy using Greville MacDonald's 1905 edition published by Arthur C. Fifield of London, which added illustrations by Arthur Hughes—and still no translation of Novalis's statements on the fairy tale. "It is a pity," writes Robertson, "that the author did not translate the passage from Novalis which he has prefixed to the book. Even in these days of culture, not every one knows German. Yet the passage quoted is, in a manner, a key to the whole work." As late as 1905, interestingly, no translation was provided of Novalis's excerpt. One assumes that many—probably most—readers were not capable of or interested in translating Novalis's quotation, thus missing a key to the structure and themes of the fantasy novel.

Not until Robert Lee Wolff, in *The Golden Key: A Study of the Fiction of George MacDonald* (Yale University Press, 1961), do readers find a scholar who grapples with an English translation of the German. Wolff identifies errors in the original German that MacDonald uses for his epigraph to *Phantastes.* According to Wolff, MacDonald used an edition of Novalis created by Tieck and Schlegel, which contained a misprint: Novalis originally writes that a fairy tale has no coherence or meaning, while later he seems to write that a fairy story must be coherent, a clear contradiction. We print the English translation below to highlight the inconsistency. We use the translation printed by the Dover (2005) edition, which slightly differs from the Eerdman (1981) edition. No translator is identified in either edition. We italicize for emphasis the passages in question.

> One can imagine stories *without rational cohesion* [***Zusammenhang***] and yet filled with associations, like dreams; and poems that are merely lovely sounding, full of beautiful words, but also without rational sense and connections—with, at the most, individual verses which are intelligible, like fragments of the most varied things. This true Poesie can at most have a general allegorical meaning and an indirect effect, as music does. Thus is Nature so purely poetic, like the room of a magician or a physicist; like a children's nursery or a carpenter's shop. . . .

> A fairy-story is like a vision *without rational connections* [*Zusammenhang*], a harmonious whole of miraculous things and events—as, for example, a musical fantasia, the harmonic sequence of an Aeolian harp, indeed Nature itself.
>
> In a genuine fairy-story, everything must be *miraculous, mysterious, and interrelated* [*zusammenhängend*]; everything must be alive, each in its own way. The whole of Nature must be wondrously blended with the whole world of the Spirit. In fairy-story the time of anarchy, lawlessness, freedom, the natural state of Nature makes itself felt in the world. . . . The world of the fairy-story is that world which is opposed throughout to the world of rational truth, and precisely for that reason it is so thoroughly an analogue to it, as Chaos is an analogue to the finished Creation.

The word *zusammenhängend* should be *unzusammenhängend* (*not coherent* or *incoherent*) in the last paragraph; in fact, Novalis did write *unzusammenhängend*, but Tieck and Schlegel made an editorial error—so Novalis was consistent in his claim that a fairy tale must not be coherent. While MacDonald was fluent in German, he did not pick up on the error, probably trusting Tieck and Schlegel as reliable editors. One conclusion that we can make is that this was simply an editorial oversight on MacDonald's part, as he replicated the errors of Tieck and Schlegel.

Another interpretation, however, might also be posited. Wolff relays that MacDonald did not quote Novalis fully, eliminating some key concepts about fairy tales. Wolff identifies the following passage that MacDonald excised:

> In the future world everything is the same as in the former world, and yet entirely different; the future world is the chaos of reason, a chaos that has permeated itself, that is both inside and outside itself. The true *Märchen* must at the same time be a prophetic representation, and ideal representation, and an absolutely necessary representation. The true teller of fairy tales [*Märchendichter*] is a seer of the future.

Wolff suggests that MacDonald, a devote Christian, "presumably could not openly embrace these views, nor perhaps did he wish to claim to be a seer of the future" (44). If Wolff is accurate, then we might also speculate that while MacDonald embraces the randomness of the fairy tale, he also desires an order to these tales because they reflect the order of the world created by God. "The Fantastic Imagination" takes pains to point out God's order.

Appendix B:
Reviews and Responses to *Phantastes*

Book reviews are important cultural markers, for they provide insight on the reading tastes at a particular time in history. George MacDonald was beginning his literary career in the 1850s, and reviews of *Phantastes* were important to him personally and monetarily—a review could help make or break his fantasy novel and, thus, his literary career. One reviewer called *Phantastes* a "confusedly furnished second-hand symbol-shop," while another called it an "amusing and highly imaginative work." The *British Quarterly Review* of 1859 probably best sums up the conflicting impressions critics had over the work: "Not a few will spend a charmed hour over the mystic fascinations of this volume; whilst others, we venture to predict, will incontinently return against its hero—perchance against its author too—a verdict of 'determination of nonsense to the brain.'" This appendix provides historical background on the reception of *Phantastes* when it was published (and, secondarily, when reviewers began to reassess the work). The importance of book reviews is central to the notion of "reception studies," an important theoretical concept that helps us better understand the complexity of the likes and dislikes of literature—and, to a degree, how literary works become foundational to the canon, the "important" works, so to speak. In *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (1982), Hans Robert Jauss claims that "the historical life of a literary work is unthinkable without the active participation of its addressees. For it is only through the process of its mediation that the work enters into the changing horizon-of-experience of a continuity in which the perpetual inversion occurs from simple reception to critical understanding, from passive to active reception, from recognized aesthetic norms to a new production that surpasses them" (19). Jauss's "aesthetics of reception" (19) situates a writer's critical reputation over time as readers' needs and expectations change. "The coherence of literature as an event," writes Jauss, "is primarily mediated in the horizon of expectations of the literary experience of contemporary and later readers, critics, and authors" (22). Jauss's "literary evolution" (34) suggests that a work's aesthetic response transforms—positively or negatively—according to the readers' views over time. Current MacDonald scholarship, for example, is directly related to past criticism, as contemporary attitudes toward MacDonald will influence the direction of MacDonald studies for the future. The companion volume to this edition of *Phantastes*, *Crossing a Great Frontier: Essays on George MacDonald's* Phantastes, edited by John Pennington (also published by Winged Lion Press), demonstrates how the critical reception of a work changes over time, always influenced, however, by the past reception.

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Reviews of *Phantastes*

ATHENAEUM, NUMBER 1619, NOVEMBER 6, 1858, PAGE 580

Many are called by the Muses sitting high on the Sacred Hill, but few have the power or the purpose to go up and reach the poet's crown. Many start with their bright upward look, and reach a little way up the Parnassian slopes, who soon grow dizzy with the ringing cheers from below, and there they are arrested by the enchantment. Others, again, appear to take a few steps, and then get lost in a mist. No sooner have they breathed the finer air than they lose their foothold and reel off into space. There they wander, making a dumb show which no mortal can understand. They cannot come near us to strike a warm human hand into ours, nor can they touch the earth to climb up higher. We look upon each other in reciprocal helplessness. Wither from weakness or willfulness, the author of this book slides off the edge of earth to join the phantom company. He seems to have lost all hold of reality. In "Within and Without" we welcomed a poet of promise and of power, for its quiet yet effective presentment of a rich-natured woman, and its subtle delineation of half-angel, half-elfin child-life. In his next volume of "Poems" he was half lost in dreamland, and yet such a poem as that on the "Child-Nurse" showed how the writer might reach reality with almost Wordsworthian strength of feeling and simplicity of speech. In "Phantastes" Mr. Mac Donald has attempted an allegory in prose, which reads as though it had been written after supping too plentifully on German romance, negative philosophy, and Shelley's "Alastor," and then, instead of his having mounted Pegasus to ride it off; he seems to have been ridden himself by a nightmare. If we speak of this book in metaphors, we must be excused, for we cannot help it. Any one after reading it might set up a confusedly furnished secondhand symbol-shop. The author says on the title-page, "In good sooth, my masters, this is no door. Yet is it a little window that looketh upon a great world." In good sooth, we have seen little through it save a wilderness of wilderment. Surely it is of ground glass. Or is there not a central crack which breaks every passing image with its fatal flaw?

Allegory shows us life moving with its shadow. This shadow may represent humanity in grotesque caricature, or as reaching to a loftier stature, but together they move—Life and Shadow—with their double existence and their double meaning, so perfectly that, according to binocular mind-vision, they may be seen as one. Now the great masters of allegory succeed by their firm grasp of reality, and they always give such a compelling interest to the life-figures that a man may and a child must follow them and their movements independently of the secondary meaning, which is shadowed on the background. We may read the "Faerie Queene," and the allegory is quite optional. Without that inner meaning there is quite enough in the outer life of that marvelous tale of chivalry—enough in the real men and women with which we are floated down an enchanted stream of poetry in their brave beauty and immortal strength. See also how Bunyan holds fast by the life as though he knew if that were true the shadow would be sure to fall right. By some happy naming of person or place he will thrust the very handle of his meaning into your hand. You may see the shadow, but he takes care to make you feel the reality. Mr. Mac Donald has given us the shadow without the life which should cause it to him, and account for it to us. Thus "Phantastes" is a riddle that will not be read. He has made his voyage into Dreamland with the phantom bark, but when he tries to bring it home to us and reveal something of the far wonder-world we cannot get on board. He has not anchored fast to the earth on which we stand.

We might attempt to divine the meaning of some of the personifications to be found in this allegory, and show, though in a glass darkly, that we could dimly identify some of the aspects and moods of mind intended in these vague hints, but we really should not like to take away pleasure from curious inquirers. Curiosity is the likeliest faculty of the reading mind to be attracted to this book, and that we are quite willing to stimulate with a few brief quotations, because of the power there is in some of the writing. Here is a picture of the knight who represents Action: —

"One evening, as a great silent flood of western gold flowed through an avenue in the woods, down the stream, just as when I saw him first, came the knight, riding on his chestnut steed. But his armour did not shine half so red as when I saw him first. Many a blow of mighty sword and axe, turned aside by the strength of his mail, and glancing adown the surface, had swept from its path the fretted rust, and the glorious steel had answered the kindly blow with the thanks of returning light. These streaks and spots made his armour look like the floor of a forest in the sunlight. He stood there a mighty form, crowned with a noble head, where, all sadness had disappeared, or had been absorbed in solemn purpose. The few words he spoke were as mighty deed for strength."

From the snatches of song, we take a little lyrical lilt. —

Alas, how easily things go wrong!
A sigh too much, or a kiss too long,
And there follows a mist and a weeping rain,
And life is never the same again.

Alas, how hardly things go right!
'Tis hard to watch in a summer night,
For the sigh will come, and the kiss will stay,
And the summer night is a winter day.

And a cheerful out-of-doors call, which Nature is not making at the present moment for with her, as with her friend Mr. Jarndyce, the "wind' in the east." —

Mother Earth
Sits with the children of her birth;
She tendeth them all as a mother hen
Her little ones round her, twelve or ten:
Oft she sitteth with hands on knee,
Idle with love for her family.
Go forth to her from the dark and the dust,
And weep beside her, if weep thou must;
If she may not hold thee to her breast,
Like a weary infant, that cries for rest;
At least she will press thee to her knee,
And tell a low sweet tale to thee,
Till the hue to thy cheek, and the light to thine eye,
Strength to thy limbs, and courage high
To thy fainting heart, return amain,
And away to work thou goest again.

Mr. Mac Donald saw the spirits of all the flowers in Fairy Land, and this he tells us in the fairy of the daisy: —

"A little chubby, round-eyed child, with such innocent trust in this look! Even the most mischievous of the fairies would not tease him, although he did not belong to their set at all, but quite a country bumpkin. He wandered about alone, and looked at everything with his little hands in his pockets, and a white nightcap on, the darling! He was not so beautiful as many other wild flowers I saw afterwards, but so dear and loving in this looks and little confident ways."

Very similar to the daisy of our every-day world; only with us the little fellow does not wear the white nightcap about his brow, except when the night comes on, or when it is pulled down by the teasing rain. But what a story we could tell of our daisy, his ways and wanderings, from the May-morning on which he smiled up to old Chaucer's fond fatherly face, until the day on which Jerrold christened him with human tears as the "forget-me-not of Death." Our world beats faerie-land, after all, as the following account of hereditary transmission will prove: —

"Now the children, there, are not born as the children are born in worlds nearer the sun. For they arrive no one knows how. A maiden walking alone hears a cry: for even there a cry is the first utterance; and searching about, she findeth, under an overhanging rock, or within a clump of bushes, or, it may be, betwixt grey stones on the side of a hill, or in any other sheltered and unexpected spot, a little child."

A very convenient theory, and one which hath, ere now, done service in the upper world; but we do not see that the fairies improve upon the gooseberry-bush and parsley-bed of inquisitive childhood. We close "Phantastes" with a feeling of sadness. One mistake is said to be permitted to every writer of books: Mr. Mac Donald has made his. Happy is the author who makes only one!

THE LEADER, NUMBER 451, NOVEMBER 13, 1858, PAGE 1222

A dreamy production of the German school of imaginative literature, not without fine fancy, considerable invention, and an occasional vein of real poetic feeling. An extract from Novalis, which is inserted by the author instead of preface, we will translate for the benefit of country gentlemen, as it will, perhaps, best explain the leading ideas of the author in penning this amusing and highly imaginative work: "One may conceive fictions like dreams, without connexion, yet having legitimate association." This very well indicates the character of the work, but by no means tells the reader enough of its quaint merits. With a special class this work is tolerably sure of being received with great favour. The conclusion appears to us to be weak, and not in harmony with the power and fancy displayed in the progress of this very fanciful work.

FROM *SPECTATOR*, DECEMBER 4, 1858, PAGE 1286

Apparently, as regards a closely treated story, Mr. Mac Donald's *Phantastes, a Fairie Romance*, scarcely falls under the head of fictions where the tale is a second- or third-rate consideration. There is no lack of incidents and adventures, and neither description nor dialogue diverts the writer unnecessarily from the business in hand. But the story itself places us in the wildest regions of fairie and fancy, and though some of the persons or incidents appear to be allegorical, yet we can rarely satisfactorily interpret them, and sometimes not at all. When a hero is transported to the realms of faery, the merely natural is of course altogether sunk—

"A new world, to Nature's laws unknown,
Breaks out refulgent, with a heaven its own."

There is no objection to fairies dwelling in flowers, or to trees having their male dryads as well as female, or to metamorphoses quite beyond the range of science, or the dreams of speculation: but the mythology should have a consistency with received opinions. This is hardly the case in Mr. Mac Donald's tale. The frame-work that carries the visitant to fairie land and occasionally brings him back again to the real world, is not very happily contrived. Classical and fairy mythology too are mixed up together, and these jumble creations drawn from romances of knight errantry, and German diablerie, with now and then touches from such productions as "Jack the Giant Killer." The objection may be only critical, but it mars the consistency, and we think injures the didactic purpose of the story. Beyond all question it is a cause of elongation. Pure "fairie romance" would have carried the author but a little way on his adventures.

Phantastes, however, is a very remarkable book. There is in it an extraordinary fertility of invention and considerable powers of fancy. The reader is carried through a fairy forest where the tiny people live and luxuriate chiefly in flowers—where the bad genii of trees, as the ash and the alder, roam about bent upon evil; which evil the good dryads strive to counteract—enchanted palaces, grottoes, caves, with enchantresses sometimes appearing lifelike, and others encased in alabaster, are met with—a knight sent upon adventures, or doomed to encounter them, often crosses the autobiographical adventurer, and has, too, a story of his own. These and similar things form the matter of the volume, and compel the reader to wonder at the invention of the author, albeit the results may belong as ranch to the property-man as to the poet. . . .

THE GLOBE, DECEMBER 30, 1858, NO PAGINATION

The second work of an author who has succeeded in a first is always a matter of interest to all parties;—to his friends, to the general public, to the reviewers, and especially to the author himself. We have a lively recollection of Mr. MacDonald's poem *Within and Without*. How we opened it with the sad regret that seizes on the critic who cannot help fearing to-day's new volume of poems will be as worthless as yesterday's. But reading a score of pages was enough to prove that there was real poetry in the volume; and we finished it with the invigorating feeling which contact with a fine mind always produces. *Within and Without* was far from perfect. It was too long by one half;—it had enough and to spare of the wordy froth which persons of tumultouous fancy and senses mistake for poetry; but the genuine thing was to be found in sufficient quantity to warrant expectation of something much better next time. *Phantastes* is very much better than *Within and Without*. One reason of this, we are willing to admit, is that a dramatic poem is "a high emprise" compared with a romance or fairy tale in prose; and that to succeed in such a literary composition must take the best powers of the highest poetic genius. A fairy tale, a romance, on the contrary, is an unpretending form of composition. It does not raise the reader's expectation too highly and it gives the author plenty of room to astonish and delight by the exercise of qualities which the reader had no right to look for. *Phantastes*, too, is in some respects an original kind of thing. We know of nothing with which it can be fairly compared. It is not like Fouqué's *Undine*, or Tennyson's *Princess*; it is not like the old tales of King Arthur's *Round Table*; it is not like the *Fairy Queen*; nor is it like the German popular and supernatural tales, yet it is not unlike all these. To describe it would be useless for any one who wishes to comprehend it. It must be read—and re-read. It is a medley, and a truly beautiful medley, of many good things—the pretty sensuous fairy tale—the old romance—the modern intellectual and spiritual poetry, and the wisdom of the wise men of the West, from him who said to the ancient Greeks—

"Oh! That mine were the deep mind, prudent, and looking on both sides,"

Down to the sage who says to the living Britons, "Down with Shams." "Work for others is the best worship you can offer God." "Suffering is a necessary portion of our earthly life, to be borne as if we were God's children, not his or any one's slaves."

The book is intended for grown persons, but the fairy part of it is so pretty that well-constituted children, not fancy-hardened by "ologies," will be pleased with it. There is an indescribable nameless grace in the mixture of deep thought and bright coloured fancy, which pervades the whole. The Maiden of the Alder Tree is a creation full of genius. That its formal idea is taken from the Scandinavian Ell women, may be granted without destroying the merit of originality. The vain, heartless, licentious woman—who "loves not man, but loves the love of any man," is admirable personified. Her fascination—her wicked works with the young and pure—the bitter sadness with which they awake from the delusion of false love, and see all the glory fade from the world; by reason of the darkness rayed out from their own hearts—all this is done without overdoing in the story of Anodos, the hero, and the Ash Tree. The moral, if we may be allowed to draw one, from the whole motley and phantastic work, is, that the "None but the brave (in arms) deserve the fairy. Man of Thought and Poetic Inspiration must give place in this world to the Man of Action and Noble Aims, seems to have been the self-deprecatory thought of the poet when he gives the lovely lady whom Anodos disenchants from marble, to the knight, Sir Percival.

There is no lack of variety and episode. One story read by Anodos in the Fairy Queen's Palace is a very fine specimen of German supernatural adventure. It is prefaced by this ingenious paragraph:—"As through the hard rock go the branching silver veins, as into the solid land run the creeks and gulf from the unresting sea; as the lights and influences of the upper worlds sink silently through the earth's atmosphere; so doth faërie invade the world of men and sometimes startle the common eye with an association as of cause and effect, when between the two no connecting links can be traced."

The lyrical pieces scattered through these pages, though unequal in execution, are all good for something. The ballad of "Sir Aglovaile" is a wondrously weird production—full of the finest touches. It's sweet, sad, burden is the only spot of light in the gloom:—

"Alas! How easily things go wrong,
A sigh too much or a kiss too long,
And there follows a mist and a weeping rain,
And life is never the same again."

Unless we except [sic] the following beautiful but ghastly lines. The living knight says to his dead lady love:—

"But show me the child thou callest mine,
Is she out to-night in the ghosts' sunshine?
In St. Peter's Church she is playing on,
At hide and seek with Apostle John.
When the moonbeams right through the windows go,
When the twelve are standing in glorious show,
She says the rest of them do not stir,
But one comes down to play with her.
Then I can go where I list and weep,
For good St. John my child will keep."

We attempt no analysis of this novel and remarkable work. Its component parts are very various—the lighter are too delicate to warrant much critical handling, a[n]d the more solemn and lofty are fit for songs and sermons of the very best kind. The dreaminess, the seeming incoherence, the strange medley of earthly fact with fanciful and thoughtful fiction, are not defects, but real beauties. This is a truth which readers must find for themselves, and in the find they will stumble upon much valuable matter.

THE ECLECTIC REVIEW, JANUARY 1859, PAGE 112

A work of rare promise. We had thought that the power of writing fairy tales had long since gone out. The only romances of the sort which are written now-a-days, are what Mr. Tennyson has called "The fairy tales of science, and the long results of time." Very fine, no doubt, and very useful; but we do miss the sweet humanities, and the delightful mysteries of the genuine folklore, and right gladly welcome the curious story of *Phantastes*. It is at once a fairy tale and an allegory. As a tale, it is written with the most perfect faith, and recalls to us the

"Prevailing poet whose undoubting mind
Believed the magic wonders that he sung."

There is something very skillful in the art with which the author passes from this nineteenth century, with all its comforts and contrivances, into the heart of a great forest which is the realm of faerie. As for the adventures of the hero in that enchanted land, they are of the right sort, and those of us who still like to preserve somewhat of the dreamy light of boyhood, will recur again and again to these beautiful legends, which, it must be confessed, however, have the fault, easily corrected, of being spun out a little too much. But although it is to the tale that most persons will be attracted, and as such it will be enjoyed by the veriest children, the title informs us that this Faerie Romance is intended for men and women. It is in fact an allegory. There is no use in our attempting an interpretation of it. Few allegories go on all fours. They limp occasionally, and we dare say that this one limps a good deal. Yet no thoughtful mind can glance through the volume without feeling that more is meant than meets the eye, that the strange adventure of *Phantastes* tells with the moral experience of most earnest and highly educated men in this self-conscious age, that in a word the description is full of rich thoughts as well as fine fancies. No motto could be more happily selected than the very modest one which we find on the title-page. "In good sooth, my masters, this is no door, yet is it a little window, that looketh upon a great world." Let us add, that though his window opens out upon the great world, it must be opened by each reader for himself. To many it will appear but as a casement full of beautiful stained glass, through which it was never intended that we should look to anything beyond.

BRITISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, VOLUME **29, 1859,** PAGES **296-97**

With eager anticipation we took our place beside this little lattice-window, which Mr. MacDonald—a poet beyond all question—opens to give us a glimpse into the tempting land of Faerie. Through the enchanted forest with its ogre of the ash, its good maiden of the beech, and evil one of the alder tree, we anxiously accompanied his hero Anodos. We felt the chill of that haunting shadow which, falling on the landscape or the shuddering flowers, reft them instantly of life; we saw the white lady raised by the power of song from her alabaster tomb; the beauties of the fairy palace with its rosy hall of phantasy, its moving marble statues and mysterious lady, again entranced us beyond the tales of our childhood. We quite loved the woman in the island cottage, with her youthful eyes set in wrinkles, although she did reveal to our hero that the white lady was destined for one more deserving than himself: indeed for the selfsame knight of the rusty armour who had warned him, at the very outset of his wanderings, to fight on, whatever might be the upshot of single encounters, for only so could the whole result of a man's life content him. We witnessed the heroic death of Anodos in Fairy Land, and his awakening from an intermediate state of blessedness in his own castle, when, lo! we had reached the end of his story! Closing the window, we asked ourselves what wisdom we had gained from our weird travel; and, to speak honestly, we are forced to hope that the hero of these adventures, pleasant and unpleasant, learned from them more than we have done ourselves. No doubt he had the advantage of us from the outset in the gift of second-sight. We, less gifted, ordinary mortals, should doubtless have passed through the hidden meaning. We dimly interpret them—together with the hateful shadow and the valiant knight—after our own fashion, without feeling at all sure that Mr. MacDonald or Anodos himself saw them in the same light. Be this as it may, we cordially recommend the reader to take our place beside the window, and learn what he can for himself; his sight may be clearer than our own, and he may discern wisdom where we only revelled in a flight of fancy. At all events, he will find much that is graceful and truthful, as well as imaginative; many of these exquisite descriptions remind us of the best passages in the best tales of Tieck—that "King in Fairy Land." Not a few will spend a charmed hour over the mystic fascinations of this volume; whilst others, we venture to predict, will incontinently return against its hero—perchance against its author too—a verdict of "determination of nonsense to the brain."

REVIEW OF *PHANTASTES* AFTER MACDONALD'S DEATH

EDWARD STANLEY ROBERTSON, "A LITERARY CAUSERIE: PHANTASTES," *THE ACADEMY*, MARCH 31, 1906, PAGES 308-9

How long is it since I first read "Phantastes"? My own old copy bears the date 1858, and I believe it is an *edition princeps*. But it is not the copy in which I read the Faerie Romance first—that was lent me by a friend. The date matters very little, except that it was very near the first publication of the book.

And now I find myself in possession of the most recent edition, issued by the author's son, Dr. Greville Macdonald, and illustrated by the author's friend, Arthur Hughes. I hope I am not ungrateful, but though I admire Mr. Hughes's illustrations, on the whole, I prefer my own old plain copy. Methinks the reader should illustrate his

"Phantastes" for himself; the mental picture is better than the material one. But this is probably an instance of that troublesome abstraction, the personal equation.

It is a pity that the author did not translate the passage from Novalis which he has prefixed to the book. Even in these days of culture, not every one knows German. Yet the passage quoted is, in a manner, a key to the whole work. It tells us of narratives which are like dreams, without consistency yet not without association: poems of which one stanza at a time is intelligible, but whose sense is unconnected—wild music lie the strains of the Æolian harp. Such a dream story, such music, is "Phantastes." Most assuredly it is not an allegory—yet there is the strongest temptation to read allegory into it. Has the adventure of Anodos with the Lady of the Alder Tree any hidden moral? Does it symbolise the human weakness which Matthew Arnold called lubricity? There is somewhat to suggest this interpretation—and yet, mere allegory or symbolism seems vulgar and out of place. Even if we conjecture that the Alder Lady only signifies false Art—true Art being typified by the White Lady of the marble cavern—yet imagination is repelled by the commonplace of allegorical interpretation.

Nevertheless, there is one theme which seems to dominate the entire story, and to demand treatment from a symbolical point of view. What does the Shadow mean? Assuredly it has a meaning—the reader feels that it must have, from the moment when the Shadow finds Anodos in in the Ogre's cottage to the moment when Anodos is able to say:

> Thus I who set out to find my Ideal, came back rejoicing that I had lost my Shadow.

And yet, what is that meaning? Sometimes one is tempted to think that it is neither more nor less than Self-Consciousness—the spirit, perhaps, of analysis, which must needs subject beauty and goodness as it were to chemical tests. Here is an episode which supports that conjecture:

> Once, as I passed by a cottage, there came out a lovely fairy child with two wondrous toys, one in each hand. The one was the tube through which the fairy-gifted poet looks when he beholds the same thing everywhere: the other that through which he looks when he combines into new forms of loveliness those images of beauty which his own choice has gathered from all regions wherein he has travelled. Round the child's head was an aureole of emanating rays. As I looked at him in

> wonder and delight, round crept from behind me the something dark, and the child stood in my shadow. Straightway he was a commonplace boy, with a rough broad-brimmed straw hat, through which brim the sun shone from behind. The toys he carried were a multiplying glass and a kaleidoscope. I sighed and departed.

Does not this read as if the Shadow were meant to symbolise the power of seeing "the seamy side of things" and the tendency to look at it? Again, the Shadow comes between Anodos and the Knight of the Rusty Armour, just at the moment when Anodos is about to confide in the Knight and to seek his friendship. But most significant of all is the following:

> The most dreadful thing of all was that I now began to feel something like satisfaction in the presence of the shadow. I began to be rather vain of my attendant, saying to myself: "In a land like this, with so many illusions everywhere, I need his aid to disenchant the things around me. He does away with all appearances and shows me things in their true colour and form. And I am not one to be fooled with the vanities of the common crowd. I will not see beauty where there is none. I will dare to behold things as they are. And if I live in a waste instead of a paradise, I will live knowing where I live."

And then follows the sad adventure of the Maiden with the Crystal Globe, which discloses to Anodos the true character of the haunting spectre. The narrative is too long to quote, and, indeed, no quotation can convey either the enthralling interest of the story or the charm of the author's style. I am constrained to say here, that although the volume contains a great deal of melodious verse, the prose is more musical still. When I say this, I except [sic] the refrain of the ballad of Sir Aglovaile. Everybody knows it, even those who have never the book, and knows nothing else about it; and yet I cannot help quoting it once more.

Alas, how easily things to wrong!
A sigh too much, or a kiss too long.
And there follows a mist and a weeping rain,
And life is never the same again.

Alas, how hardly things go right!
'Tis hard to watch on a summer night,
For the sigh will come, and the kiss will stay,
And the summer night is a winter day.

One must needs seek out the best in Shelley, or Keats, or Coleridge to surpass these lines; and, indeed, the whole poem in which they occur is a masterpiece of melody as well as fancy.

I will extract just one more garment of verse, because it seems to me a more representative exemplar of the author's style than the poem of Sir Aglovaile, and especially than the lovely refrain. The following lines are only part of a poem which is itself part of a greater whole, the latter portion, however, merging in prose.

Through the realms of the monarch Sun
Creeps a world whose course had begun,
On a wary path with a wary pace.
Before the Earth sprang forth on her race:
But many a time the Earth had sped
Around the path she still must tread,
Ere the elder planet, on leaden wing
Once circled the court of the planets' king.

There in that lonely and distant star,
The seasons are not as our seasons are;
But many a year hath Autumn to dress
The trees in their matron loveliness;
As long hath old Winter in triumphs to go
O'er beauties dead in his vaults below;
And many a year the Spring doth wear
Combining the icicles from her hair;
And Summer, clear Summer, hath years of June,
With large white clouds and cool showers at noon;
And a beauty that grows to a weight like grief,
Till a burst of tears is the heart's relief.

Children, born when Winter is king,
May never rejoice in the hoping Spring;
Though their own heart buds are bursting with joy,
And the child hath grown to the girl or boy;
But may die with cold and icy hours
Watching them ever in place of flowers.
And some who awake from their primal sleep,
When the sighs of Summer through forests creep,
Live and love and are loved again;
Seek for pleasure and find its pain;
Sink to the last, their forsaken sleeping
With the same sweet odours around them creeping.

This is fine verse, but not up to the mark of the Refrain. And, as I said, the prose is even more fascinating than the verse. I despair of quoting—not because I could not find plenty of fine passages, but because, to speak plainly, I should not know where to stop. Or, to put it in another way, I could find no "purple patch"; for the whole robe is of pure purple, and to seek for a pattern were to rend and to deface it. So perhaps I had best desist. After all, this is a Causerie—and my French dictionary tells me that a Causerie is a chat. I have chatted about a book which for the greater part of half a century has had a singular fascination for me, and I hope that I have suggested, at least, the reasons which have led me to think that "Phantastes" is one of the greatest works of pure imagination to which the Victorian era has given birth.

Must I confess that I have read very little of George Macdonald's besides "Phantastes"? What I have read is far from being up to the mark of the Faerie Romance—although in all Macdonald's work the fascination of his style must needs to felt. I refer to his other works merely to explain, if possible, why "Phantastes" has always especially appealed to me. The others (such, at least, as I have read) are "stories with a purpose." The good people are always made to come out all right, and the naughty people are at least compelled to "say they are sorry." Indeed, this is about the severest punishment which befalls most of them, for our author is an optimist and something more. I will not say that this disposition of his does not show itself in "Phantastes"—in fact, in the concluding chapter there is an optimistic pronouncement which might almost be called crude. But taken as a whole, this Faerie Romance is a faerie romance pure and simple—it is the kind of tale described in its German foreword—and if there may be symbolism or allegory to be discerned here and there, assuredly there is not purpose, in the sense in which "purpose" may be found, for instance, in the "Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood." This, by the way, is the latest of Macdonald's books which I have read, and as I said, I am acquainted with but few of his numerous novels. I only mentioned the "Annals" to illustrate my remark that many of his later writings are obviously stories with a purpose. I am tempted to say, a somewhat crudely and inartistically displayed purpose—but this Causerie is about "Phantastes," and "Phantastes" only. Were it not for this, I might be tempted to compare the Faerie Romance with Goethe's "Märchen"—but to do so would lead me too far afield.

REVIEW OF *PHANTASTES* IN COMMEMORATION OF MACDONALD'S CENTENARY BIRTH

FROM H. J. C. GRIERSON, "GEORGE MACDONALD." *THE ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY REVIEW*, VOLUME 12, NUMBER 35, NOVEMBER 1924, PAGES 1-13

The evergrowing custom of celebrating anniversaries has its painful as well as its pleasant aspect. It is like the recurrence of our own birthdays, once the number of our years has ceased to be such as can be decently recorded by candles of a cake, when we tend to look back rather than forward and compare what we had hoped to be and to achieve with the scanty actual achievement . . . .

Is George MacDonald read to-day? I cannot say. I have not read him myself for many years or met readers, except children—lovers of some of his fairy tales. I asked a young man of letters, whose father had known George MacDonald, and he could only tell me that in preparing a new edition of a biographical dictionary he had cut out most of the article on the poet to make room for the Prime Minister. Which will have the largest space in 2024? . . . .

It was not for fame that George MacDonald wrote but in the first place to earn a living for himself and his ever-growing family, and in the second to deliver a spiritual message to his nation and generation. . . . Neither his novels of everyday life nor his more popular fairy tales can stand quite on their own legs as stories . . . .

One who sets out, as George MacDonald did, to challenge, not Calvinism merely, which after all may prove to be an ally, but the facts of life—pain, disease, madness, sin, death—in the strength of a fairy tale in the simple but tremendous affirmation that God is Love, is bound sooner or later to take the road of the mystic . . . . It was, one feels, his desire to express his mystical reading of life in a symbolical guise that drew MacDonald to write fairy tales. "Phantastes" is one of his earliest works, indeed his earliest prose work, and if it has proved itself a delightful fairy tale pure and simple, to readers young and old, no one can re-read it without feeling how instinct it is with MacDonald's deepest thoughts about life and love and death. Even a young reader must suspect that there is more than meets the eye in the symbolism of the ash-tree and the beech-tree; the beautiful woman whom Pygmalion-like the hero conjures from the marble by his song; the siren who proved to be the Maid of the Alder; the shadow that was Anodos's attendant and disappears only when he has finally conquered selfishness in love and in service; the three doors through which the hero issued from the old woman's cottage and what they led to, and many other episodes of the bewildering, fascinating tale. The fairyland which Anodos enters is just life itself, and what he has to learn is the art of understanding its significance. . . .

Appendix C: German Romantic and Other Influences on *Phantastes*

Upon first encountering *Phantastes*, a reader may find the quotations that begin each chapter a distraction, "filler" that is not important to the story that MacDonald tells. Reader beware! David Robb writes in *George MacDonald* (1987) that "it is clear, too, that memories of other literature have been crucial in helping form *Phantastes*: an awareness of sources does not merely help us explain the work's genesis, but can conceivably take us to the heart of it. This applies even to the chapter-mottoes, which are much more intimately related to the rest of the work than is normally the case" (91). The great modernist poet T. S. Eliot in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919) posited the notion that "tradition" is central to the understanding of literature, for originality is centered on the past: "Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves . . . the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to any one who would continue to be a poet . . . . the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order" (4). Harold Bloom, in *Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973; 2nd ed. 1997) extends Eliot's idea of influence to argue that writers fight an oedipal struggle between the strong fatherly past and the son's (writer's) attempt to slay that fatherly influence to create new, unique literature that breaks with the past influence, yet simultaneously is a homage to that influence. Bloom suggest that "strong" writers will "wrestle with their strong precursors, even to the death" (5) to create original art. Bloom's Freudian, and thus masculine, theory has been appropriated by feminist scholars, most notably Susan Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. While MacDonald never cites a female writer to begin his chapters in *Phantastes*, Gilbert and Gubar quote MacDonald at the beginning of their work—from *Lilith* (1895). The following selections demonstrate the various literary influences on MacDonald *and* the dialogue *Phantastes* has with these influences and contemporary works that MacDonald may be responding to.

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FROM EDMUND SPENSER, *THE FAERIE QUEENE*, BOOK 2, CANTO 9, 1590

While The Faerie Queene *is an important influence on MacDonald's work generally and* Phantastes *specifically, the character of Phantastes appears only briefly in Spenser's epic. The following excerpt follows Alma, who is giving a tour of her castle to Prince Arthur and Guyon. She takes them to her turret, where they meet Phantastes, representing the imagination; an unnamed character, representing judgment and reason; and Eumnestes and his assistant Anamestes, representing memory.*

The house of Temperance, in which
doth sober Alma dwell,
Besiegd of many foes, whom straunger
knightes to flight compell.

. . . That Turrets frame most admirable was,
Like highest heaven compassed around,
And lifted high above this earthly masse,
Which it survewd, as hils doen lower ground;
But not on ground mote like to this be found,
Not that, which antique Cadmus whylome built
In Thebes, which Alexander did confound;
Nor that proud towre of Troy, though richly guilt,
From which young Hectors bloud by cruell Greekes was spilt.

The roofe hereof was arched over head,
And deckt with flowers and herbars daintily;
Two goodly Beacons, set in watches stead,
Therein gave light, and flamd,
For they of living fire most subtilly
Were made, and set in silver sockets bright,
Cover'd with lids deviz'd of substance sly,
That readily they shut and open might.
O who can tell the prayses of that makers might!

Ne can I tell, ne can I stay to tell
This parts great workemanship, and wondrous powre,
That all this other worldes worke doth excell,
And likest is unto that heavenly towre
That God hath built for his owne blessed bowre.
Therein were divers rowmes, and divers stages,
But three the chiefest, and of greatest powre,
In which there dwelt three honorable sages;
The wisest men, I weene, that lived in their ages.

Not he, whom Greece, the Nourse of all good arts,
By Phoebus doome, the wisest thought alive,
Might be compar'd to these by many parts:
Nor that sage Pylian syre, which did survive
Three ages, such as mortall men contrive,
By whose advise old Priams citie fell,
With these in praise of pollicies mote strive.
These three in these three rowmes did sondry dwell,
And counselled faire Alma, how to governe well.

The first of them could things to come foresee:
The next could of thinges present best advize;
The third things past could keep in memoree:
So that no time, nor reason could arize,
But that the same could one of these comprize.
For thy the first did in the forepart sit,
That nought mote hinder his quicke prejudize:
He had a sharpe foresight, and working wit
That never idle was, ne once could rest a whit.

His chamber was dispainted all within
 With sondry colours, in the which were writ
 Infinite shapes of things dispersed thin;
 Some such as in the world were never yit,
 Ne can devized be of mortall wit;
 Some daily seene, and knowen by their names,
 Such as in idle fantasies do flit:
 Infernall Hags, Centaurs, feendes, Hippodames,
Apes, Lions, Aegles, Owles, fooles, lovers, children, Dames.

And all the chamber filled was with flyes,
 Which buzzed all about, and made such sound
 That they encombred all mens eares and eyes,
 Like many swarmes of Bees assembled round,
 After their hives with honny do abound:
 All those were idle thoughts and fantasies,
 Devices, dreames, opinions unsound,
 Shewes, visions, sooth-sayes, and prophesies;
And all that fained is, as leasings, tales, and lies.

Emongst them all sate he, which wonned there,
 That hight Phantastes by his nature trew;
 A man of yeares yet fresh, as mote appere,
 Of swarth complexion, and of crabbed hew,
 That him full of melancholy did shew;
 Bent hollow beetle browes, sharpe staring eyes,
 That mad or foolish seemd: one by his vew
 Mote deeme him borne with ill disposed skyes,
When oblique Saturne sate in th' house of agonyes.

Whom Alma having shewed to her guestes,
 Thence brought them to the second rowme, whose wals
 Were painted faire with memorable gestes,
 Of famous Wisards; and with picturals
 Of Magistrates, of courts, of tribunals,
 Of commen wealthes, of states, of pollicy,
 Of lawes, of judgementes, and of decretals;
 All artes, all science, all Philosophy,
And all that in the world was ay thought wittily.

Of those that rowme was full; and them among
  There sate a man of ripe and perfect age,
  Who did them meditate all his life long,
  That through continuall practise and usage,
  He now was growne right wise and wondrous sage:
  Great pleasure had those straunger knightes, to see
  His goodly reason and grave personage,
  That his disciples both desyrd to bee;
But Alma thence them led to th'hindmost rowme of three.

That chamber seemed ruinous and old,
  And therefore was removed far behind,
  Yet were the wals, that did the same uphold,
  Right firme and strong, though somewhat they declind;
  And therein sate an old old man, halfe blind,
  And all decrepit in his feeble corse,
  Yet lively vigour rested in his mind,
  And recompenst him with a better scorse:
Weake body well is chang'd for minds redoubled forse.

This man of infinite remembraunce was,
  And things foregone through many ages held,
  Which he recorded still, as they did pas,
  Ne suffred them to perish through long eld,
  As all things else, the which this world doth weld;
  But laid them up in his immortall scrine,
  Where they for ever incorrupted dweld:
  The warres he well remembred of king Nine,
Of old Assaracus, and Inachus divine.

The yeares of Nestor nothing were to his,
  Ne yet Mathusalem, though longest liv'd;
  For he remembred both their infancis:
  Ne wonder then, if that he were depriv'd
  Of native strength now, that he them surviv'd.
  His chamber all was hangd about with rolls,
  And old records from auncient times deriv'd,
  Some made in books, some in long parchment scrolls,
That were all worme-eaten, and full of canker holes.

Amidst them all he in a chaire was sett,
 Tossing and turning them withouten end;
 But for he was unhable them to fett,
 A litle boy did on him still attend
 To reach, when ever he for ought did send;
 And oft when things were lost, or laid amis,
 That boy them sought, and unto him did lend:
 Therefore he Anamnestes cleped is;
And that old man Eumnestes, by their propertis.

The knightes there entring, did him reverence dew,
 And wondred at his endlesse exercise,
 Then as they gan his Library to vew,
 And antique Regesters for to avise,
 There chaunced to the Princes hand to rize,
 An auncient booke, hight *Briton moniments*,
 That of this lands first conquest did devize,
 And old division into Regiments,
Till it reduced was to one mans governements.

Sir Guyon chaunst eke on another booke,
 That hight *Antiquitiee of Faery lond.*
 In which whenas he greedily did looke;
 Th'ofspring of Elves and Faeryes there he fond,
 As it delivered was from hond to hond:
 Whereat they, burning both with feruent fire
 Their countreys auncestry to understond,
 Crav'd leave of Alma, and that aged sire,
To read those bookes; who gladly graunted their desire. . . .

FROM PHINEAS FLETCHER,
THE PURPLE ISLAND, OR THE ISLE OF MAN, CANTO VI, 1633

Fletcher was influenced by Spenser—MacDonald was influenced by both. The Purple Island, *an epic comprised of twelve cantos, is an allegorical poem about the human body and mind. While human veins are represented as physical rivers, and bones the variety of mountains,* Phantastes *represents the mind of the imagination.*

46

. . . The next that in the Castles front is plac't,
Phantastes hight; his yeares are fresh and green,
His visage old, his face too much defac't
With ashes pale, his eyes deep sunken been
  With often thoughts, and never slackt intention:
  Yet he the fount of speedy apprehension,
Father of wit, the well of arts, and quick invention.

47

But in his private thoughts and busy brain
Thousand thinne forms, and idle fancies flit;
The three-shap't *Sphinx*, and direfull *Harpyes* train,
Which in the world had never being yet:
  Oft dreams of fire and water, loose delight;
  And oft arrested by some ghastly sprite,
Nor can he think, nor speak, nor move for great affright.

48

Phantastes from the first all shapes deriving,
In new abiliments can quickly dight;
Of all materiall and grosse parts depriving,
Fits them unto the noble Princes sight;
  Which soon as he hath view'd with searching eye,
  He straight commits them to his Treasurie,
Which old *Eumnestes* keeps, Father of memorie.

49

Eumnestes old, who in his living screen
(His mindefull breast) the rolls and records bears
Of all the deeds, and men, which he hath seen,
And keeps lockt up in faithfull Registers:
  Well he recalls *Nimrods* first tyrannie,
  And *Babels* pride daring the loftie skie;
Well he recalls the earths twice-growing infancie.

50

Therefore his body weak, his eyes half blinde,
But minde more fresh, and strong; (ah better fate!)
And as his carcase, so his house declin'd;
Yet were the walls of firm and able state:
    Onely on him a nimble Page attends,
    Who when for ought the aged Grandsire sends,
With swift, yet backward steps, his helping aidance lends.

51

But let my song passe from these worthy Sages
Unto this Islands highest Soveraigne,
And those hard warres which all the yeare he wages:
For these three late a gentle shepherd-swain
    Most sweetly sung, as he before had seen
    In *Alma's* house: his memorie yet green
Lives in his well-tun'd songs, whose leaves immortall been.

52

Nor can I guesse, whether his Muse divine
Or gives to those, or takes from them his grace;
Therefore *Eumnestes* in his lasting shrine
Hath justly him enroll'd in second place:
    Next to our *Mantuan* poet doth he rest;
    There shall our *Colin* live for ever blest,
Spite of those thousand spites, which living him opprest.

53

The Prince his time in double office spends:
For first those forms and fancies he admits,
Which to his court busie *Phantastes* sends,
And for the easier discerning fits:
    For shedding round about his sparkling light,
    He cleares their duskie shades, and cloudy night,
Producing like himself their shapes all shining bright.

54

As when the Sunne restores the glitt'ring day,
The world late cloath'd in nights black livery,
Doth now a thousand colours fair display,
And paints it self in choice varietie,
    Which late one colour hid, the eye deceiving;
    All so this Prince those shapes obscure receiving,
With his suffused light makes ready to conceiving.

FROM NOVALIS (FRIEDRICH VON HARDENBERG), *HEINRICH VON OFTERDINGEN: A ROMANCE*, 1800 TRANSLATION BASED ON TIECK AND SCHLEGEL EDITION, 1842

Novalis was a major influence on MacDonald, maybe the most significant of all. The romance, which was never completed, concerns Henry, who is influenced by the many stories he hears. He goes on a series of journeys and has a central dream where he envisions a blue flower but wakes up before there is any resolution to that dream, instilling a longing in him. Heinrich is a model for Anodos in Phantastes.

PART FIRST.
THE EXPECTATION.

DEDICATION.

Thou didst to life my noble impulse warm,
Deep in the spirit of the world to look.
And with thy hand a trusting faith I took,
Securely bearing me through every storm,
With sweet forebodings thou the child didst bless,
To mystic meadows leading him away,
Stirring his bosom to its finest play,
Ideal, thou, of woman's tenderness.
Earth's vexing trifles shall I not refuse?
Thine is my heart and life eternally,—
Thy love my being constantly renews!
To art I dedicate myself for thee,
For thou, beloved, wilt become the Muse
And gentle Genius of my poesy.
In endless transmutation here below
The hidden might of song our land is greeting;
Now blesses us in form of Peace unfleeting,
And now encircles us with childhood's glow.
She pours an upper light upon the eye,
Defines the sentiment for every art,
And dwells within the glad or weary heart,
To comfort it with wondrous ecstasy.
Through her alone I woke to life the truest,
Drinking the proffered nectar of her breast,

And dared to lift my face with joy the newest.
Yet was my highest sense with sleep oppressed.
Till angel-like thou, loved one, near me flewest.
And, kindling in thy look, I found the rest.

THE EXPECTATION.

CHAPTER I.

The parents had already retired to rest; the old clock ticked monotonously from the wall; the windows rattled with the whistling wind, and the chamber was dimly lighted by the flickering glimmer of the moon. The young man lay restless on his bed, thinking of the stranger and his tales. "It is not the treasures," said he to himself, "that have awakened in me such unutterable longings. Far from me is all avarice; but I long to behold the blue flower. It is constantly in my mind, and I can think and compose of nothing else. I have never been in such a mood. It seems as if I had hitherto been dreaming, or slumbering into another world; for in the world, in which hitherto I have lived, who would trouble himself about a flower?—I never have heard of such a strange passion for a flower here. I wonder, too, whence the stranger comes? None of our people have ever seen his like; still I know not why I should be so fascinated by his conversation. Others have listened to it, but none are moved by it as I am. Would that I could explain my feelings in words! I am often full of rapture, and it is only when the blue flower is out of my mind, that this deep, heart-felt longing overwhelms me. But no one can comprehend this but myself. I might think myself mad, were not my perception and reasonings so clear; and this state of mind appears to have brought with it superior knowledge on all subjects. I have heard, that in ancient times beasts, and trees, and rocks conversed with men. As I gaze upon them, they appear every moment about to speak to me; and I can almost tell by their looks what they would say. There must yet be many words unknown to me. If I knew more, I could comprehend better. Formerly I loved to dance, now I think rather to the music."

The young man gradually lost himself in his sweet fancies, and fell asleep. Then he dreamed of regions far distant, and unknown to him. He crossed the sea with wonderful ease; saw many strange monsters; lived with all sorts of men, now in war, now in wild tumult, and now in peaceful cottages. Then he fell into captivity and degrading want. His feelings had never been so excited. His life was an unending tissue, of the brightest colors. Then came death, a return again to life; he loved, loved intensely, and was separated from the object of his passion. At length towards the break of day his soul became calmer, and the images his fancy formed grew clearer, and more lasting. He dreamed that he was walking alone in a dark forest, where the light broke only at intervals through the green net-work of the trees. He soon came to a passage through some rocks, which led to the top of a neighboring hill, and, to ascend which he was obliged to scramble over the mossy stones, which some stream in former times had torn down. The higher he climbed, the more was the forest lit up, until at last he came to a small meadow situated on the declivity of the mountain. Behind the meadow rose a lofty cliff, at whose foot an opening was visible, which seemed to be the beginning of a path hewn in the rock. The path guided him gently along, and ended in a wide expanse, from which at a distance a clear light shone towards him. On entering this expanse, he beheld a mighty beam of light, which, like the stream from a fountain, rose to the overhanging clouds, and spread out into innumerable sparks, which gathered themselves below into a great basin. The beam shone like burnished gold; not the least noise was audible; a holy silence reigned around the splendid spectacle. He approached the basin, which trembled and undulated with ever-varying colors. The sides of the cave were coated with the golden liquid, which was cool to the touch, and which cast from the walls a weak, blue light. He dipped his hand in the basin, and bedewed his lips. He felt as if a spiritual breath had pierced through him, and he was sensibly strengthened and refreshed. A resistless desire to bathe himself made him undress and step into the basin. Then a cloud tinged with the glow of evening appeared to surround him; feelings as from Heaven flowed into his soul; thoughts innumerable and full of rapture strove to mingle together within him; new imaginings, such as never before had struck his fancy, arose before him, which, flowing into each other, became visible beings about him. Each wave of the lovely element pressed to him like a soft bosom. The flood seemed like a solution of the elements of beauty, which constantly became embodied in the forms of charming maidens around him. Intoxicated with rapture, yet conscious of every impression, he swam gently down the glittering stream. A sweeter slumber now overcame him. He dreamed of many strange events, and a new vision appeared to him. He dreamed that he was sitting on the soft turf by the margin of a fountain, whose waters flowed into the air, and seemed to vanish in it. Dark blue rocks with various colored veins rose in the distance. The daylight around him was milder and clearer than usual; the sky was of a sombre blue, and free from clouds. But what most attracted his notice, was a tall, light-blue flower, which stood nearest the fountain, and touched it with its broad, glossy leaves. Around it grew numberless flowers of varied hue, filling the air with the richest perfume. But he saw the blue flower alone, and gazed long upon it with inexpressible tenderness. He at length was about to approach it, when it began to move, and change its form. The leaves increased their beauty, adorning the growing stem. The flower bended towards him, and revealed among its leaves a blue, outspread collar, within which hovered a tender face. His delightful astonishment was increasing with this singular change, when suddenly his mother's voice awoke him, and he found himself in his parents' room, already gilded by the morning sun. He was too happy to be angry at the sudden disturbance of his sleep. He bade his mother a kind good morning, and returned her hearty embrace.

"You sleeper," said his father, "how long have I been sitting here filing? I have not dared to do any hammering on your account. Your mother would let her dear son sleep. I have been obliged to wait for my breakfast too. You have done wisely in choosing to become one of the learned, for whom we wake and work. But a real, thorough student, as I have been told, is obliged to spend his nights in studying the works of our wise forefathers."

"Dear father," said Henry, "let not my long sleep make you angry with me, for you are not accustomed to be so. I fell asleep late, and have been much disturbed by dreams. The last, however, was pleasant, and one which I shall not soon forget, and which seems to me to have been something more than a mere dream."

"Dear Henry," said his mother, "you have certainly been lying on your back, or else your thoughts were wandering at evening prayers. Come, eat your breakfast, and cheer up."

Henry's mother went out. His father worked on industriously, and said; "Dreams are froth, let the learned think what they will of them; and you will do well to turn your attention from such useless and hurtful speculations. The times when Heavenly visions were seen in dreams have long past by, nor can we understand the state of mind, which those chosen men, of whom the Bible speaks, enjoyed. Dreams, as well as other human affairs, must have been of a different nature then. In the age in which we live, there is no direct intercourse with Heaven. Old histories and writings are now the only fountains, from which we can draw, as far as is needful, a knowledge of the spiritual world; and instead of express revelations, the Holy Ghost now speaks to us immediately through the understandings of wise and sensible men, and by the lives and fate of those most distinguished for their piety. I have never been much edified by the visions, which are now seen; nor do I place much confidence in the wonders, which our divines relate about them. Yet let every one, who can, be edified by them; I would not cause any one to err in his faith."

"But, dear father, upon what grounds are you so opposed to belief in dreams, when singular changes, and flighty, unstable nature, are at least worthy of some reflection? Is not every dream, even the most confused, a peculiar vision, which, though we do not call it sent from Heaven, yet makes an important rent in the mysterious curtain, which, with a thousand folds, hides our inward natures from our view? We can find accounts of many such dreams, coming from credible men, in the wisest books; and you need only call to mind, to support what I have said, the dream which our good pastor lately related to us, and which appeared to you so remarkable. But, without taking those writings into account, if now for the first time you should have a dream, how would it overwhelm you, and how constantly would your thoughts be fixed upon the miracle, which, from its very frequency, now appears such a simple occurrence. Dreams appear to me to break up the monotony and even tenor of life, to serve as a recreation to the chained fancy. They mingle together all the scenes and fancies of life, and change the continual earnestness of age, into the merry sports of childhood. Were it not for dreams, we should certainly grow older; and though they be not given us immediately from above; yet they should be regarded as Heavenly gifts, as friendly guides, in our pilgrimage to the holy tomb. I am sure that the dream, which I have had this night, has been no profitless occurrence in my life; for I feel that it has, like some vast wheel, caught hold of my soul, and is hurrying me along with it in its mighty revolutions."

Henry's father smiled humorously, and said, looking to his wife, who had just come in, "Henry cannot deny the hour of his birth. His conversation boils with the fiery Italian wines, which I brought with me from Rome, and with which we celebrated our wedding eve. I was another sort of man then. The southern breezes had thawed out my northern phlegm. I was overflowing with spirit and humor, and you also were an ardent, charming girl. Everything was arranged at your father's in grand style; musicians and minstrels were collected from far and wide, and Augsburg had never seen a merrier marriage."

"You were just now speaking of dreams," said Henry's mother. "Do you not remember, that you then told me of one, which you had had at Rome, and which first put it into your head to come to Augsburg as my suitor?"

"You put me opportunely in mind of it," said the old man, "for I had entirely forgotten that singular dream, which, at the time of its occurrence, occupied my thoughts not a little; but even that is only a proof of what I have been saying about dreams. It would be impossible to have one more clear and regular. Even now I remember every circumstance in it, and yet, what did it signify? That I dreamed of you, and soon after felt an irrepressible desire to possess you, was not strange; for I already knew you. The agreeable and amiable traits of your character strongly affected me, when I first saw you; and I was prevented from making love to you, only by the desire of visiting foreign lands. At the time of the dream my curiosity was much abated; and hence my love for you more easily mastered me."

"Please to tell us about that curious dream," said Henry.

"One evening," said his father, "I had been loitering about, enjoying the beauty of the clear, blue sky, and of the moon, which clothed the old pillars and walls with its pale, awe-inspiring light. My companions had gone to see the girls, and love and homesickness drove me into the open air. During my walk, I felt thirsty, and went into the first decent looking mansion I met with, to ask for a glass of wine, or milk. An old man came to the door, who perhaps at first regarded me as a suspicious visitor; but when I told him what I wished, and he learned that I was a foreigner, and a German, he kindly asked me into the house, bade me sit down, brought out a bottle of wine, and asked me some questions about my business. We began a desultory conversation, during which he gave me some information about painters, poets, sculptors, and ancient times. I had scarce ever heard about such matters; and it teemed as if I had landed in a new world. He showed me some old seals and other works of art, and then read to me, with all the fire of youth, some beautiful passages of poetry. Thus the hours fled as moments. Even now my heart warms with the recollection of the wonderful thoughts and emotions, which crowded upon me that evening. He seemed quite at home in the pagan ages, and longed, with incredible ardor, to dwell in the times of grey antiquity. At last he showed me a chamber, where I could pass the night, for it was too late for me to return to the city. I soon fell asleep and dreamed.—I thought that I was passing out of the gates of my native city. It seemed to me that I was going to get something done, but where, and what, I did not know. I took the road to Hartz, and walked quickly along, as merry as if going to a festival. I did not keep the road, but cut across through wood and valley, till I came to a lofty mountain. From its top I gazed on the golden fields around me, beheld Thuringia in the distance, and was so situated, that no other mountain could obstruct my view. Opposite lay the Hartz with its dusky hills. Castles, convents, and whole districts were embraced in the prospect. My ideas were all clear and distinct. I thought of the old man, in whose house I was sleeping; and my visit seemed like some occurrence of past years. I soon saw an ascending path leading into the mountain, and I followed it. After some time I came to a large cave; there sat a very old man in a long garment, before an iron table, gazing incessantly upon a wondrously beautiful maiden, that stood before him hewn in marble. His beard had grown through the iron table, and covered his feet. His features were serious, yet kind, and put me in mind of a head by one of the old masters, which my host had shown me in the evening. The cave was filled with glowing light. While I was looking at the old man, my host tapped me on the shoulder, took my hand, and led me through many long paths, till we saw a mild light shining in the distance, like the dawn of day. I hastened to it, and soon found myself in a green plain; but there was nothing about it to remind me of Thuringia. Giant trees, with their large, glossy leaves, spread their shade far and wide. The air was very hot, yet not oppressive. Around me flowers and fountains were springing from the earth. Among the former there was one that particularly pleased me, and to which all the others seemed to do homage."

"Dear father," eagerly exclaimed Henry, "do tell me its color."

"I cannot recollect it, though it was so fixed in my mind at the time."

"Was it not blue?"

"Perhaps it was," continued the old man, without giving heed to the peculiar vehemence of his son. "All I recollect is, that my feelings were so wrought up, that for a time I forgot all about my guide. When at length I turned towards him, I noticed that he was looking at me attentively, and that he met me with a pleasant smile. I do not remember how I came from that place. I was again on the top of the mountain; my guide stood by my side and said, 'You have seen the wonder of the world. It lies in your power to become the happiest being in the world, and, besides that, a celebrated man. Remember well what I tell you. Come on St. John's day, towards evening, to this place, and when you have devoutly prayed to God to interpret this vision, the highest earthly lot will be yours. Also take notice particularly of a little blue flower, which you will find above here; pluck it, and commit yourself humbly to heavenly guidance.' I then dreamed that I was among most splendid scenes and noble men, ravished by the swift changing objects that met my eyes. How fluent were my words! how free my tongue! How music swelled its strains! Afterwards everything became dull and insignificant as usual. I saw your mother standing before me, with a kind and modest look. A bright-looking child was in her arms. She reached it to me; it gradually grew brighter; at length it raised itself on its dazzling white wings, took us both in its arms, and soared so high with us, that the earth appeared like a plate of gold, covered with beautifully wrought carving. I only recollect, that, after this vision, the flower, the old man, and the mountain appeared before me again. I awoke soon after, much agitated by vehement love. I bade farewell to my hospitable friend, who urged me to repeat my visit often. I promised to do so, and should have kept my promise, had I not shortly after left Rome for Augsburg, my mind being much excited by the scenes I had witnessed." . . .

FROM NOVALIS, *HYMNS TO THE NIGHT*, 1800
TRANSLATED BY GEORGE MACDONALD IN *RAMPOLLI*, 1897

Hymns to the Night *is considered one of the most important collections of poems defining the German romantic movement. In the work, Novalis demonstrates that life and death complement each other, with death—or night—representing the romantic impulse of life.* Phantastes *clearly identifies with Novalis's philosophy.*

Longing After Death

Into the bosom of the earth!
Out of the Light's dominions!
Death's pains are but the bursting forth
Of glad Departure's pinions!
Swift in the narrow little boat,
Swift to the heavenly shore we float!
Blest be the everlasting Night,

And blest the endless Slumber!
We are heated with the day too bright,
And withered up with cumber!
We're weary of that life abroad:
Come, we will now go home to God!
Why longer in this world abide?

Why love and truth here cherish?
That which is old is set aside—For
us the new may perish!
Alone he stands and sore downcast
Who loves with pious warmth the Past.
The Past where yet the human spirit

In lofty flames did rise;
Where men the Father did inherit,
His countenance recognize;
And, in simplicity made ripe,
Many grew like their archetype.
The Past wherin, still rich in bloom,

Old stems did burgeon glorious;
And children, for the world to come,
Sought pain and death victorious;

And, though both life and pleasure spake,
Yet many a heart for love did break.

The Past, where to the glow of youth
God yet himself declared;
And early death, in loving truth
The young beheld, and dared—
Anguish and torture patient bore
To prove they loved him as of yore.

With anxious yearning now we see
That Past in darkness drenched;
With this world's water never we
Shall find our hot thirst quenched:
To our old home we have to go
That blessed time again to know.

What yet doth hinder our return?
Long since repose our precious!
Their grave is of our life the bourn;
We shrink from times ungracious!
By not a hope are we decoyed:
The heart is full; the world is void!

Infinite and mysterious,
Thrills through me a sweet trembling,
As if from far there echoed thus
A sigh, our grief resembling:
The dear ones long as well as I,
And send to me their waiting sigh.

Down to the sweet bride, and away
To the beloved Jesus!
Courage! the evening shades grow gray,
Of all our griefs to ease us!
A dream will dash our chains apart,
And lay us on the Father's heart.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, "ODE: INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD," 1802-1804; 1807

MacDonald had a kinship with Wordsworth: he published an essay "Wordsworth's Poetry" in A Dish of Orts *(1893), where he focused on Wordsworth's Christian pantheism—that God's work is reflected in all, especially nature. MacDonald also identified with the notion that the child is wise in its innocence. MacDonald was the editor of* Good Words for the Young *(from 1869-1872), a journal focused on young readers. The epigraph that appeared on the title page for the journal is from Wordsworth: "The child is the father of the man."*

This was composed during my residence at Town-end, Grasmere. Two years at least passed between the writing of the four first stanzas and the remaining part. To the attentive and competent reader the whole sufficiently explains itself; but there may be no harm in adverting here to particular feelings or "experiences" of my own mind on which the structure of the poem partly rests. Nothing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being. I have said elsewhere—

> "A simple child,
> That lightly draws its breath,
> And feels its life in every limb,
> What should it know of death!"—

But it was not so much from feelings of animal vivacity that "my" difficulty came as from a sense of the indomitableness of the Spirit within me. I used to brood over the stories of Enoch and Elijah, and almost to persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated, in something of the same way, to heaven. With a feeling congenial to this, I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. At that time I was afraid of such processes. In later periods of life I have deplored, as we have all reason to do, a subjugation of an opposite character, and have rejoiced over the remembrances, as is expressed in the lines—

"Obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;" etc.

To that dream-like vividness and splendour which invest objects of sight in childhood, every one, I believe, if he would look back, could bear testimony, and I need not dwell upon it here: but having in the poem regarded it as presumptive evidence of a prior state of existence, I think it right to protest against a conclusion, which has given pain to some good and pious persons, that I meant to inculcate such a belief. It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith, as more than an element in our instincts of immortality. But let us bear in mind that, though the idea is not advanced in revelation, there is nothing there to contradict it, and the fall of Man presents an analogy in its favour. Accordingly, a pre-existent state has entered into the popular creeds of many nations; and, among all persons acquainted with classic literature, is known as an ingredient in Platonic philosophy. Archimedes said that he could move the world if he had a point whereon to rest his machine. Who has not felt the same aspirations as regards the world of his own mind? Having to wield some of its elements when I was impelled to write this poem on the "Immortality of the Soul," I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorising me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could as a poet.

"The Child is Father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety."
See "My Heart Leaps up When I Behold."

I

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—

Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy Shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blessed Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,

And the Children are culling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm:—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
—But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely Nurse doth all she can

To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little Actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy Soul's immensity;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality

Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest—
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,

Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day

Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

FROM WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, *THE PRELUDE, BOOK 1*, 1850

In Book XII of The Prelude *Wordsworth writes of spots of time:*

There are in our existence spots of time,
That with distinct pre-eminence retain
A renovating virtue, whence—depressed
By false opinion and contentious thought,
Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight,
In trivial occupations, and the round
Of ordinary intercourse—our minds
Are nourished and invisibly repaired;
A virtue, by which pleasure is enhanced,
That penetrates, enables us to mount,
When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen.

Phantastes *can be seen as a series of spots of time that nourish Anodos as he gains wisdom about himself and the world.*

Spot of time: stealing a boat

. . . One evening (surely I was led by her)
I went alone into a Shepherd's Boat,
A Skiff that to a Willow tree was tied
Within a rocky Cave, its usual home.
'Twas by the shores of Patterdale, a Vale
Wherein I was a Stranger, thither come
A School-boy Traveller, at the Holidays.
Forth rambled from the Village Inn alone
No sooner had I sight of this small Skiff,

Discover'd thus by unexpected chance,
Than I unloos'd her tether and embark'd.
The moon was up, the Lake was shining clear
Among the hoary mountains; from the Shore
I push'd, and struck the oars and struck again
In cadence, and my little Boat mov'd on
Even like a Man who walks with stately step
Though bent on speed. It was an act of stealth
And troubled pleasure; not without the voice
Of mountain-echoes did my Boat move on,
Leaving behind her still on either side
Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
Until they melted all into one track
Of sparkling light. A rocky Steep uprose
Above the Cavern of the Willow tree
And now, as suited one who proudly row'd
With his best skill, I fix'd a steady view
Upon the top of that same craggy ridge,
The bound of the horizon, for behind
Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.
She was an elfin Pinnace; lustily
I dipp'd my oars into the silent Lake,
And, as I rose upon the stroke, my Boat
Went heaving through the water, like a Swan;
When from behind that craggy Steep, till then
The bound of the horizon, a huge Cliff,
As if with voluntary power instinct,
Uprear'd its head. I struck, and struck again
And, growing still in stature, the huge Cliff
Rose up between me and the stars, and still,
With measur'd motion, like a living thing,
Strode after me. With trembling hands I turn'd,
And through the silent water stole my way
Back to the Cavern of the Willow tree.
There, in her mooring-place, I left my Bark,
And, through the meadows homeward went, with grave
And serious thoughts; and after I had seen
That spectacle, for many days, my brain
Work'd with a dim and undetermin'd sense
Of unknown modes of being; in my thoughts
There was a darkness, call it solitude,

Or blank desertion, no familiar shapes
Of hourly objects, images of trees,
Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
But huge and mighty Forms that do not live
Like living men mov'd slowly through the mind
By day and were the trouble of my dreams. . . .

FROM ROBERT BLAIR, *THE GRAVE* (1743)
ILLUSTRATIONS BY WILLIAM BLAKE (1808)

MacDonald was intrigued by fellow Scotsman Robert Blair, whose The Grave *connected with MacDonald's belief in death. Blair's poem is an early example of the graveyard school of poetry that had as its theme mortality. In many of his fantasies and fairy tales—including* Phantastes, *"The Golden Key," and* Lilith*—MacDonald was preoccupied by death. The ending of Blair's poem (lines 654-767) is consistent with MacDonald's view that death is the beginning of more life, where the body and soul are united in a heavenly afterlife.*

MacDonald, though, is more influenced by the 1808 illustrations by William Blake, which were engraved by Luigi Schiavonetti, for the publisher Robert Hartleg Cromek. Blake's illustrations capture that liminal space between life and death, and the images probably became etched in MacDonald's mind as he conceived his own liminal space of Fairy Land. On an interesting note: C. S. Lewis has MacDonald as a spiritual guide in The Great Divorce *(1945), a work that responded, in part, to Blake's* The Marriage of Heaven and Hell *(1790), which was one of MacDonald's favorite works by Blake.*

But know that thou must render up the dead,
And with high interest too! they are not thine;
But only in thy keeping for a season,
Till the great promis'd day of restitution;
When loud diffusive sound from brazen trump
Of strong lung'd cherub shall alarm thy captives,
And rouse the long, long sleepers into life,
Daylight, and liberty.—
Then must thy doors fly open, and reveal
The minds that lay long forming under ground,

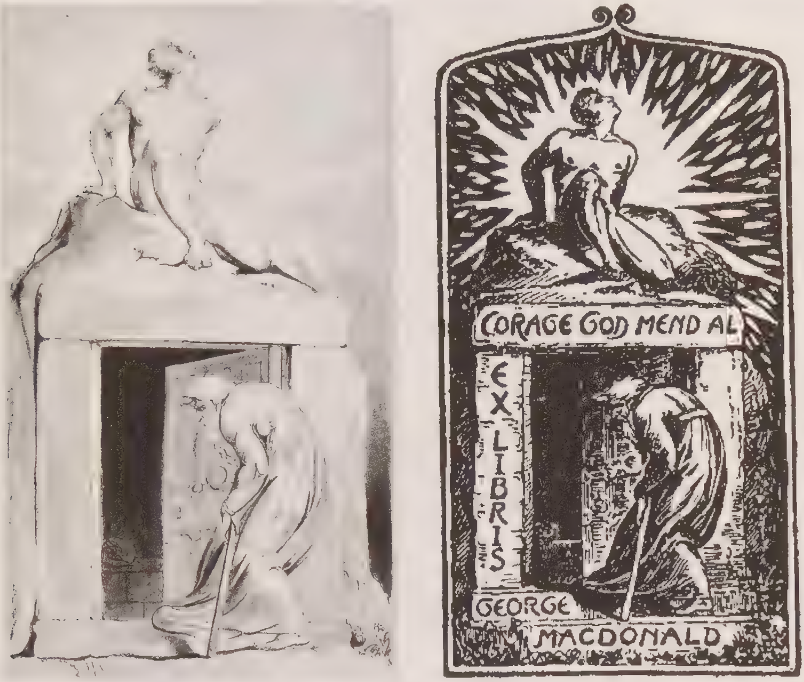
In their dark cells immur'd; but now full ripe,
And pure as silver from the crucible,
That twice has stood the torture of the fire,
And inquisition of the forge. We know
Th' illustrious Deliverer of mankind,
The Son of God, thee foil'd. Him in thy power
Thou could'st not hold; self-vigorous he rose,
And, shaking off thy fetters, soon retook
Those spoils his voluntary yielding lent:
(Sure pledge of our releasement from thy thrall!)
Twice twenty days he sojourn'd here on earth,
And shewed himself alive to chosen witnesses,
By proofs so strong, that the most slow assenting
Had not a scruple left. This having done,
He mounted up to Heaven. Methinks I see him
Climb the aerial heights, and glide along
Athwart the severing clouds: but the faint eye,
Flung backwards in the chase, soon drops its hold,
Disabled quite, and jaded with pursuing.
Heaven's portals wide expand to let him in,
Nor are his friends shut out: as a great prince
Not for himself alone procures admission,
But for his train; it was his royal will,
That where he is there should his followers be.
Death only lies between, a gloomy path!
Made yet more gloomy by our coward fears!
But nor untrod, nor tedious; the fatigue
Will soon go off. Besides, there's no bye-road
To bliss. Then why, like ill-condition'd children,
Start we at transient hardships in the way
That leads to purer air and softer skies,
And a ne'er-setting sun? Fools that we are!
We wish to be where sweets unwith'ring bloom;
But straight our wish revoke, and will not go.
So have I seen, upon a summer's even,
Fast by the rivulet's brink, a youngster play:
How wishfully he looks to stem the tide!
This moment resolute, next unresolv'd,
At last he dips his foot; but as he dips,
His fears redouble, and he runs away
From th' inoffensive stream, unmindful now

Of all the flowers that paint the further bank,
And smil'd so sweet of late. Thrice welcome Death!
That, after many a painful bleeding step,
Conducts us to our home, and lands us safe
On the long wish'd-for shore. Prodigious change!
Our bane turn'd to a blessing. Death disarm'd
Loses its fellness quite; all thanks to him
Who scourg'd the venom out! Sure the last end
Of the good man is peace. How calm his exit!
Night-dews fall not more gently to the ground,
Nor weary worn-out winds expire so soft.
Behold him in the ev'ning-tide of life,
A life well spent, whose early care it was
His riper years should not upbraid his green;
By unperceiv'd degrees he wears away;
Yet like the sun seems larger at his setting!
High in his faith and hopes, look how he reaches
After the prize in view! and, like a bird
That's hamper'd struggles hard to get away!
Whilst the glad gates of sight are wide expanded
To let new glories in, the first fair fruits
Of the fast-coming harvest! Then—O then
Each earth-born joy grows vile, or disappears,
Shrunk to a thing of nought! O how he longs
To have his passport sign'd, and be dismiss'd!
'Tis done—and now he's happy! The glad soul
Has not a wish uncrown'd. E'en the lag flesh
Rests too in hope of meeting once again
Its better half, never to sunder more.
Nor shall it hope in vain: the time draws on
When not a single spot of burial-earth,
Whether on land or in the spacious sea,
But must give back its long committed dust
Inviolate: and faithfully shall these
Make up the full account; not the least atom
Embezzled, or mislaid, of the whole tale.
Each soul shall have a body ready furnish'd;
And each shall have his own. Hence, ye profane!
Ask not how this can be. Sure the same power
That rear'd the piece at first, and took it down,
Can re-assemble the loose scatter'd parts,

And put them as they were. Almighty God
Has done much more; nor is his arm impair'd
Through length of days; and what he can he will:
His faithfulness stands bound to see it done.
When the dread trumpet sounds, the slumb'ring dust,
Not unattentive to the call, shall wake;
And every joint possess its proper place,
With a new elegance of form, unknown
To its first state. Nor shall the conscious soul
Mistake its partner; but, amidst the crowd
Singling its other half, into its arms
Shall rush with all th' impatience of a man
That's new come home, who having long been absent,
With haste runs over every different room,
In pain to see the whole. Thrice happy meeting!
Nor time, nor death, shall ever part them more!
'Tis but a night, a long and moonless night;
We make the grave our bed, and then are gone!

Thus at the shut of even, the weary bird
Leaves the wide air, and in some lonely brake
Cow'rs down, and dozes till the dawn of day;
Then claps his well-fledg'd wings, and bears away.

Figure 1:
Blake's Death's Door compared to MacDonald's Bookplate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GEORGE MACDONALD

Figure 2:
Friendship

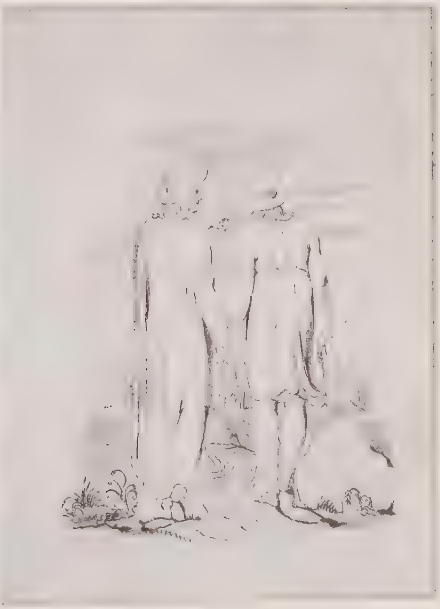


FIGURE 3:
THE GAMBOLS OF THE GHOSTS

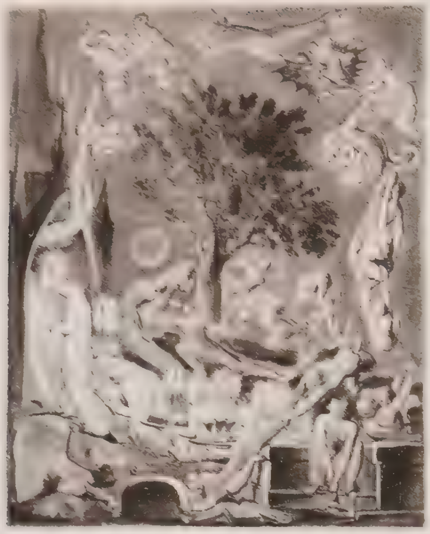


FIGURE 4:
THE DESCENT OF MAN

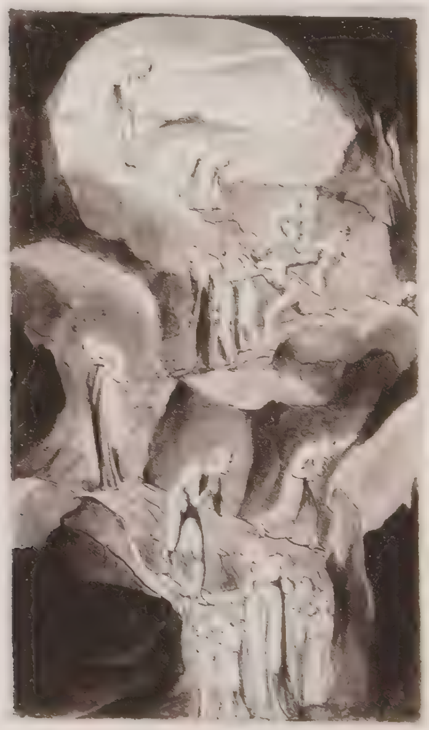


FIGURE 5:
THE SOUL AND THE GRAVE

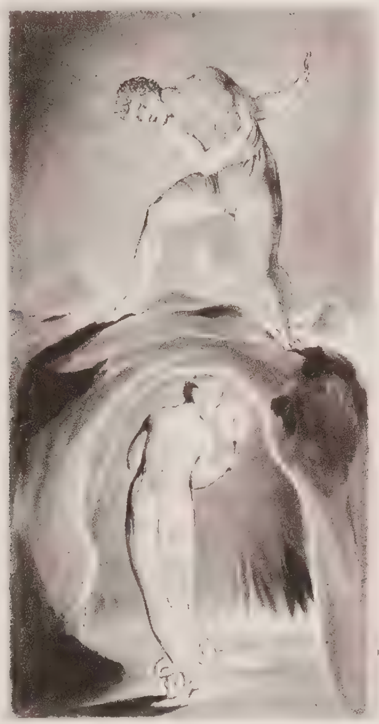
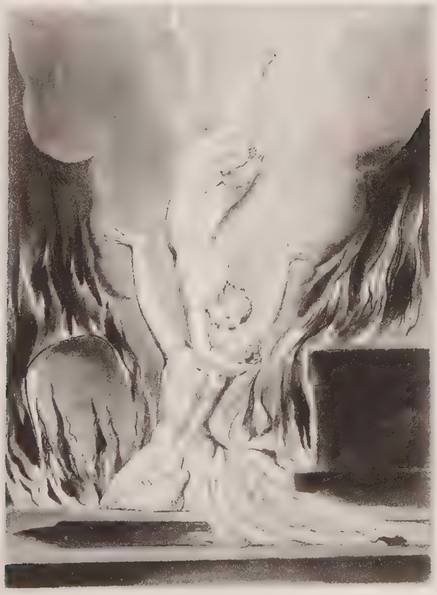


FIGURE 6:
REUNION OF BODY AND SOUL



SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, "DEJECTION: AN ODE," 1802

While MacDonald gravitated toward Wordsworth's optimistic view of the world, he was also influenced by Coleridge's response to Wordsworth's optimism. In fact, much of Anodos's journey in Fairy Land finds him dejected and longing for fulfillment.

Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,
With the old Moon in her arms;
And I fear, I fear, my Master dear!
We shall have a deadly storm.
(Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence)

I

Well! If the Bard was weather-wise, who made
The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,
This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence
Unroused by winds, that ply a busier trade
Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy flakes,
Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes
Upon the strings of this Æolian lute,
Which better far were mute.
For lo! the New-moon winter-bright!
And overspread with phantom light,
(With swimming phantom light o'erspread
But rimmed and circled by a silver thread)
I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling
The coming-on of rain and squally blast.
And oh! that even now the gust were swelling,
And the slant night-shower driving loud and fast!
Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,
And sent my soul abroad,
Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,
Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live!

II

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear—
O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood,
To other thoughts by yonder throstle woo'd,

All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
Have I been gazing on the western sky,
And its peculiar tint of yellow green:
And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye!
And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
That give away their motion to the stars;
Those stars, that glide behind them or between,
Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen:
Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;
I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!

III

My genial spirits fail;
And what can these avail
To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?
It were a vain endeavour,
Though I should gaze for ever
On that green light that lingers in the west:
I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

IV

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live:
Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud!
And would we aught behold, of higher worth,
Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the Earth—
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

V

O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of me
What this strong music in the soul may be!
What, and wherein it doth exist,

This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
This beautiful and beauty-making power.
Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was given,
Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and shower,
Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower
A new Earth and new Heaven,
Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud—
Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud—
We in ourselves rejoice!
And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight,
All melodies the echoes of that voice,
All colours a suffusion from that light.

VI

There was a time when, though my path was rough,
This joy within me dallied with distress,
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness:
For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,
And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.
But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth;
But oh! each visitation
Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of Imagination.
For not to think of what I needs must feel,
But to be still and patient, all I can;
And haply by abstruse research to steal
From my own nature all the natural man—
This was my sole resource, my only plan:
Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

VII

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,
Reality's dark dream!
I turn from you, and listen to the wind,
Which long has raved unnoticed. What a scream

Of agony by torture lengthened out
That lute sent forth! Thou Wind, that rav'st without,
Bare crag, or mountain-tairn, or blasted tree,
Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,
Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,
Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,
Mad Lutanist! who in this month of showers,
Of dark-brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,
Mak'st Devils' yule, with worse than wintry song,
The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.
Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds!
Thou mighty Poet, e'en to frenzy bold!
What tell'st thou now about?
'Tis of the rushing of an host in rout,
With groans, of trampled men, with smarting wounds—
At once they groan with pain, and shudder with the cold!
But hush! there is a pause of deepest silence!
And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd,
With groans, and tremulous shudderings—all is over—
It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and loud!
A tale of less affright,
And tempered with delight,
As Otway's self had framed the tender lay,—
'Tis of a little child
Upon a lonesome wild,
Nor far from home, but she hath lost her way:
And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,
And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother hear.

VIII

'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I of sleep:
Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep!
Visit her, gentle Sleep! with wings of healing,
And may this storm be but a mountain-birth,
May all the stars hang bright above her dwelling,
Silent as though they watched the sleeping Earth!
With light heart may she rise,
Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,
Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice;
To her may all things live, from pole to pole,

Their life the eddying of her living soul!
O simple spirit, guided from above,
Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,
Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice.

FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER, "SEHNSUCHT," 1813 TRANSLATION: GEORGE MACDONALD, "LONGING," FROM *RAMPOLI*, 1897

MacDonald's fondness for the German romantic writers is clearly seen in the following poem that captures the sensations Anodos has during his journey in Fairy Land.

Ah, from out this valley hollow,
By cold fogs always oppressed,
Could I but the outpath follow—
Ah, how were my spirit blest!
Hills I see there, glad dominions,
Ever young, and green for aye!
Had I wings, oh, had I pinions,
To the hills were I away!

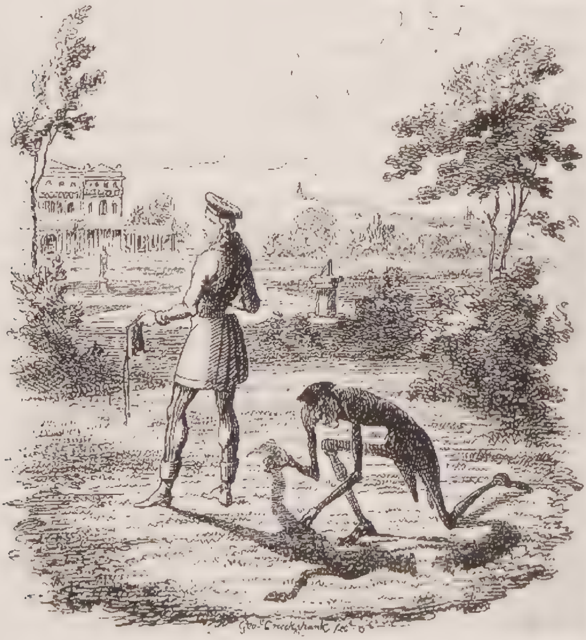
Harmonies I hear there ringing,
Tones of sweetest heavenly rest;
And the gentle winds are bringing
Balmy odours to my breast!
Golden fruits peep out there, glowing
Through the leaves to Zephyr's play;
And the flowers that there are blowing
Will become no winter's prey!

Oh, what happy things are meeting
There, in endless sunshine free!
And the airs on those hills greeting,
How reviving must they be!
But me checks yon raving river
That betwixt doth chafe and roll;
And its dark waves rising ever

Strike a horror to my soul!
See a skiff on wild wave heaving!
But no sailor walks the mole.
Quick into it, firm believing,
For its sails they have a soul!
Thou must trust, nor wait to ponder:
God will give no pledge in hand;
Nought but miracle bears yonder
To the lovely wonderland!

From Adelbert von Chamisso, *Peter Schlemihl*, 1814
Translation by John Bowring 1841
Illustration by George Cruikshank

This German romantic fairy tale plays a variation on a classic story of selling one's soul to the Devil. In this case, Peter sells his shadow to the Devil for riches. However, Peter realizes the importance of his shadow and attempts to retrieve it, finally coping with the fact that he cannot ever be reunited with his shadow. MacDonald plays with the shadow in Phantastes, *clearly influenced by Chamisso's tale.*


Geo. Cruikshank fec.

CHAPTER 1

At last, after a fortunate, but to me most tedious passage, we reached our destined haven. As soon as the boat had landed me on the shore, I loaded myself with my little possessions, and forcing my way through the swarming crowd, entered the first and meanest house distinguished by a sign-board. I ordered a chamber; the waiter measured me with a glance, and sent me up to the garret.

I ordered fresh water, and inquired for the abode of Mr. Thomas Jones. “Near the North gate, the first country house on the right-hand side; a large new house of red and white marble, supported by many pillars.” Well; it was yet early; I opened my bundle, laid out my newly-turned black coat, clad myself in my sprucest garments, put my letter of introduction into my pocket, and bent my way to the man, who, I modestly hoped, was destined to befriend me.

After I had gone through the long North-street, and reached the gate, I saw the columns glimmering through the green trees. “It is here, then,” I thought. I wiped the dust from my feet with my pocket-handkerchief, arranged my cravat, and rung the bell. The door flew open, the servants narrowly examined me in the hall, but the porter at last announced me, and I had the honour to be summoned into the park, where Mr. Jones was walking with a small company. I knew him instantly by his portly self-complacency. He received me tolerably well—as a rich man is wont to receive a poor dependent devil; looked towards me, but without turning from the rest of the company, and took from me the letter I held in my hand. “Aye, aye! from my brother; I have not heard from him a long time. Is he well? There”—he continued, addressing the company without waiting for an answer, and pointed with the letter to a hill, “There I have ordered a new building to be erected.” He broke the seal, but not the conversation, of which wealth became the subject. “He who is not the master of at least a million,” he interposed, “forgive the expression, is a ragamuffin.”—“That is true, indeed,” exclaimed I, with full, overflowing feeling. He must have been pleased with the expression of my concurrence, for he smiled on me and said, “Remain here, young friend: I shall perhaps have time to tell you, by and by, what I think of it.” He pointed to the letter, put it into his pocket, and turned again to the company. He then offered his arm to a young lady; other gentlemen were busied with other fair ones; every one found some one to whom he attached himself, and they walked towards the rose-encircled hill.

I lingered idly behind, for not a soul deemed me worthy of notice. The company was extremely cheerful, jocular, and witty;

they spoke seriously of trifles, and triflingly of serious matters; and I observed they unconcernedly directed their satires against the persons and the circumstances of absent friends. I was too great a stranger to understand much of these discussions; too much distressed and self-retired to enter into the full merit of these enigmas.

We reached the rose-grove. The lovely Fanny, the queen, as it seemed, of the day, was capricious enough to wish to gather for herself a blooming branch; a thorn pricked her, and a stream, as bright as if from damask roses, flowed over her delicate hand. This accident put the whole company in motion. English court-plaister was instantly inquired after. A silent, meagre, pale, tall, elderly man, who stood next to me, and whom I had not before observed, instantly put his hand into the close-fitting breast-pocket of his old-fashioned, grey taffetan coat, took out a small pocket-book, opened it, and with a lowly bow gave the lady what she had wished for; she took it without any attention to the giver, and without a word of thanks. The wound was bound up, and they ascended the hill, from whose brow they admired the wide prospect over the park's green labyrinth, extending even to the immeasurable ocean.

It was indeed a grand and noble sight. A light speck appeared on the horizon between the dark waters and the azure heaven. "A telescope, here!" cried the merchant; and before any one from the crowds of servants appeared to answer his call, the grey man, as if he had been applied to, had already put his hand into his coat-pocket: he had taken from it a beautiful Dollond, and handed it over to Mr. Jones; who, as soon as he had raised it to his eye, informed the company that it was the ship which had sailed yesterday, driven back by contrary winds. The telescope passed from hand to hand, but never again reached that of its owner. I, however, looked on the old man with astonishment, not conceiving how the large machine had come out of the tiny pocket. Nobody else seemed surprised, and they appeared to care no more about the grey man than about me.

Refreshments were produced; the rarest fruits of every climate, served in the richest dishes. Mr. Jones did the honours with easy, dignified politeness, and for the second time directed a word to me: "Eat then, you did not get this on your voyage." I bowed, but he did not observe me: he was talking to somebody else.

They would willingly have remained longer on the sod of the sloping hill, and have stretched themselves over the outspread turf, had they not feared its dampness. "Now it would be enchanting," said somebody of the company, "if we had Turkey carpets to spread here."

The wish was hardly expressed ere the man in the grey coat had put his hand into his pocket, and with modest, even humble demeanour, began to draw out a rich embroidered Turkey carpet. It was received by the attendants as a matter of course, and laid down on the appointed spot. Without further ceremony the company took their stand upon it. I looked with new surprise on the man, the pocket, and the carpet, which was about twenty paces long, and ten broad. I rubbed my eyes, not knowing what to think, and especially as nobody else seemed moved by what had passed.

I longed to learn something about the man, and to inquire who he was; but I knew not to whom to apply, for I really was more afraid of the gentlemen-servants than of the gentlemen served. I mustered up my spirits at last, and addressed myself to a young man who seemed less pretending than the rest, and who had oftener been left to himself. I gently asked him, who that courteous gentleman was in grey clothes.—"Who? he that looks like an end of thread blown away from a tailor's needle?"—"Yes, he that stands alone."—"I do not know him," he answered; and, determined, as it seemed, to break off the discussion with me, turned away, and entered on a trifling conversation with somebody else.

The sun now began to shine more intensely, and to annoy the ladies. The lovely Fanny carelessly addressed the grey man, whom, as far as I know, nobody had addressed before, with the frivolous question: "had he a marquee?" He answered with a low reverence, as if feeling an undeserved honour had been done him; his hand was already in his pocket, from which I perceived canvas, bars, ropes, iron-work—everything, in a word, belonging to the most sumptuous tent, issuing forth. The young men helped to erect it; it covered the whole extent of the carpet, and no one appeared to consider all this as at all extraordinary.

If my mind was confused, nay terrified, with these proceedings, how was I overpowered when the next-breathed wish brought from his pocket three riding horses. I tell you, three great and noble steeds, with saddles and appurtenances! Imagine for a moment, I pray you, three saddled horses from the same pocket which had before produced a pocket-book, a telescope, an ornamented carpet twenty paces long and ten broad, a pleasure-tent of the same size, with bars and iron-work! If I did not solemnly assure you that I had seen it, with my own eyes, you would certainly doubt the narrative.

Though there was so much of embarrassment and humility in the man, and he excited so little attention, yet his appearance to me had in it something so appalling, that I was not able to turn away my eyes from him. At last I could bear it no longer.

I determined to steal away from the company; and this was easy for one who had acted a part so little conspicuous. I wished to hasten back to the city, and to return in pursuit of my fortune the following morning to Mr. J., and if I could muster up courage enough, to inquire something about the extraordinary grey man. Oh, had I been thus privileged to escape!

I had hastily glided through the rose-grove, descended the hill, and found myself on a wide grassplot, when, alarmed with the apprehension of being discovered wandering from the beaten path, I looked around me with enquiring apprehension. How was I startled when I saw the old man in the grey coat behind, and advancing towards me! He immediately took off his hat, and bowed to me more profoundly than any one had ever done before. It was clear he wished to address me, and without extreme rudeness I could not avoid him. I, in my turn, uncovered myself, made my obeisance, and stood still with a bare head, in the sunshine, as if rooted there. I shook with terror while I saw him approach; I felt like a bird fascinated by a rattlesnake. He appeared sadly perplexed, kept his eyes on the ground, made several bows, approached nearer, and with a low and trembling voice, as if he were asking alms, thus accosted me:—

"Will the gentleman forgive the intrusion of one who has stopt him in this unusual way? I have a request to make, but pray pardon . . ."—"In the name of heaven, Sir!" I cried out in my anguish, "what can I do for one who—" We both started back, and methought both blushed deeply.

After a momentary silence he again began: "During the short time when I enjoyed the happiness of being near you, I observed, Sir,—will you allow me to say so—I observed, with unutterable admiration, the beautiful, beautiful shadow in the sun, which with a certain noble contempt, and perhaps without being aware of it, you threw off from your feet; forgive me this, I confess, too daring intrusion, but should you be inclined to transfer it to me?"

He was silent, and my head turned round like a water-wheel. What could I make of this singular proposal for disposing of my shadow? He is crazy! thought I; and with an altered tone, yet more forcible, as contrasted with the humility of his own, I replied:

"How is this, good friend? Is not your own shadow enough for you? This seems to me a whimsical sort of bargain indeed." He began again, "I have in my pocket many matters which might not be quite unacceptable to the gentleman; for this invaluable shadow I deem any price too little."

A chill came over me: I remembered what I had seen, and knew not how to address him who I had just ventured to call my good friend. I spoke again, and assumed an extraordinary courtesy to set matters in order.

"Pardon, Sir, pardon your most humble servant, I do not quite understand your meaning; how can my shadow—" He interrupted me: "I only beg your permission to be allowed to lift up your noble shadow, and put it in my pocket: how to do it is my own affair. As a proof of my gratitude for the gentleman, I leave him the choice of all the jewels which my pocket affords; the genuine divining rods, mandrake roots, change pennies, money extractors, the napkins of Rolando's Squire, and divers other miracle-workers,—a choice assortment; but all this is not fit for you—better that you should have Fortunatus's wishing-cap, restored spick and span new; and also a fortune-bag which belonged to him." "Fortunatus's fortune-bag!" I exclaimed; and, great as had been my terror, all my senses were now enraptured by the sound. I became dizzy,—and nothing but double ducats seemed sparkling before my eyes.

"Condescend, Sir, to inspect and make a trial of this bag." He put his hand into his pocket, and drew from it a moderately sized, firmly-stitched purse of thick cordovan, with two convenient leather cords hanging to it, which he presented to me. I instantly dipped into it, drew from it ten pieces of gold, and ten more, and ten more, and yet ten more;—I stretched out my hand. "Done! the bargain is made; I give you my shadow for your purse." He grasped my hand, and knelt down behind me, and with wonderful dexterity I perceived him loosening my shadow from the ground from head to foot;—he lifted it up;—he rolled it together and folded it, and at last put it into his pocket. He then stood erect, bowed to me again, and returned back to the rose grove. I thought I heard him laughing softly to himself. I held, however, the purse tight by its strings—the earth was sun-bright all around me—and my senses were still wholly confused.

CHAPTER II

At last I came to myself, and hastened from a place where apparently I had nothing more to do. I first filled my pockets with gold, then firmly secured the strings of the purse round my neck, taking care to conceal the purse itself in my bosom. I left the park unnoticed, reached the high road, and bent my way to the town. I was walking thoughtfully towards the gate, when I heard a voice behind me: "Holla! young Squire! holla! don't you hear?" I looked round—an old woman was calling after me;—"Take care, sir, take care—you have lost your shadow!"—"Thanks, good woman."—I threw her a piece of gold for her well-meant counsel, and walked away under the trees.

At the gate I was again condemned to hear from the sentinel, "Where has the gentleman left his shadow?" and immediately afterwards a couple of women exclaimed, "Good heavens! the poor fellow has no shadow!" I began to be vexed, and carefully avoided walking in the sun. This I could not always do: for instance, in the Broad-street, which I was next compelled to cross; and as ill-luck would have it, at the very moment when the boys were being released from school. A confounded hunch-backed vagabond—I see him at this moment—had observed that I wanted a shadow. He instantly began to bawl out to the young tyros of the suburbs, who first criticised me, and then bespattered me with mud: "Respectable people are accustomed to carry their shadows with them when they go into the sun." I scattered handfuls of gold among them to divert their attention; and, with the assistance of some compassionate souls, sprang into a hackney coach. As soon as I found myself alone in the rolling vehicle, I began to weep bitterly. My inward emotion suggested to me, that even as in this world gold weighs down both merit and virtue, so a shadow might possibly be more valuable than gold itself; and that, as I had sacrificed my riches to my integrity on other occasions, so now I had given up my shadow for mere wealth; and what ought, what could become of me?

I continued still sadly discomposed, when the coach stopped before the old tavern. I was shocked at the thought of again entering that vile garret. I sent for my baggage, took up the miserable bundle with contempt, threw the servants some pieces of gold, and ordered to be driven to the principal hotel. The house faced the north, so I had nothing to fear from the sun. I dismissed the driver with gold, selected the best front room, and locked myself in as soon as possible.

And how do you imagine I employed myself? Oh! my beloved Chamisso, I blush to confess it even to you. I drew forth the luckless purse from my bosom, and impelled by a sort of madness which burned and spread within me like a furious conflagration, I shook out gold, and gold, and gold, and still more gold;—strewed it over the floor, trampled on it, and made it tinkle, and feasting my weak senses on the glitter and the sound, I added pile to pile, till I sunk exhausted on the golden bed. I rolled about and wallowed in delicious delirium. And so the day passed by, and so the evening. My door remained unopened, and night found me still reposing on the gold, when sleep at length overcame me.

Then I dreamed of you. I fancied I was standing close to the glass door of your little apartment, and saw you sitting at your work-table, between a skeleton and a parcel of dried plants. Haller, Humboldt, and Linnæus lay open before you;—on your sofa were a volume of Goethe, and *The Magic Ring*. I looked at you for a long time, then at everything around you, and then at you again; but you moved not—you breathed not—you were dead.

I awoke: it seemed to be yet early—my watch had stopped;—I felt as if I had been bastinadoed—yet both hungry and thirsty, for since the previous morning I had eaten nothing. With weariness and disgust I pushed away from me the gold, which but a little time before had satiated my foolish heart: I now in my perplexity knew not how to dispose of it. But it could not remain there. I tried to put it again into the purse—no; none of my windows opened upon the sea. I was obliged to content myself by dragging it with immense labour and difficulty to a large cupboard, which stood in a recess, where I packed it up. I left only a few handfuls lying about. When I had finished my labour, I sat down exhausted in an arm-chair, and waited till the people of the house began to stir. I ordered breakfast, and begged the landlord to be with me as soon as practicable.

With this man I arranged the future management of my household. He recommended to me for my personal servant a certain *Bendel*, whose honest and intelligent countenance instantly interested me. It was he, who from that moment accompanied me through life with a sympathizing attachment, and shared with me my gloomy destiny. I passed the whole day in my apartments with servants out of place, shoemakers, tailors, and shopkeepers; I provided myself with all necessaries, and bought large quantities of jewels and precious stones, merely to get rid of some of my piles of gold; but it seemed scarcely possible to diminish the heap.

Meanwhile I contemplated my situation with most anxious doubts. I dared not venture one step from my door, and at evening ordered forty wax-lights to be kindled in my saloon, before I left the dark chamber. I thought with horror of the dreadful scene with the schoolboys, and determined, whatever it might cost, once more to sound public opinion. The moon, at this season, illumined the night. Late in the evening I threw a wide cloak around me, pulled down my hat over my eyes, and glided out of the house trembling like a criminal. I walked first along the shadows of the houses to a remote open place;

I then abandoned their protection, stepped out into the moonshine, resolving to learn my destiny from the lips of the passers-by.

But spare me, my friend, the painful repetition of what I was condemned to undergo! The deepest pity seemed to inspire the fairer sex; but my soul was not less wounded by this than by the contumely of the young, and the proud disdain of the old, especially of those stout and well-fed men, whose dignified shadows seemed to do them honour. A lovely, graceful maiden, apparently accompanying her parents, who seemed not to look beyond their own footsteps, accidentally fixed her sparkling eyes upon me. She obviously started as she remarked my shadowless figure; she hid her beautiful face beneath her veil, hung down her head, and passed silently on.

I could bear it no longer. Salt streams burst forth from my eyes, and with a broken heart I hurried tremblingly back into darkness. I was obliged to grope along by the houses, in order to feel my steps secure, and slowly and late I reached my dwelling.

That night was a sleepless one. My first care at daybreak was to order the man in the grey coat to be everywhere sought for. Perchance I might be lucky enough to discover him—and oh! what bliss if he as well as I repented of our foolish bargain. I sent for Bendel; he seemed both apt and active. I described to him minutely the man who held in his possession that treasure, without which life was but a torment to me. I told him the time, the place where I had seen him; particularized to him all the persons who could assist his inquiries; and added, that he should especially ask after a Dollond's telescope, a gold embroidered Turkish carpet, a superb tent, and also the black riding horses; whose history,—I did not state how,—was closely connected with that of the unintelligible man, whom nobody seemed to notice, and whose appearance had destroyed the peace and happiness of my life.

When I had done, I brought out as much gold as I was able to carry. I laid jewels and precious stones to a still greater amount upon the pile. "Bendel," I said, "this levels many a path, and makes many a difficult thing easy; be not sparing, you know I am not; but go and rejoice your master with the information on which his only hopes are built."

He went—he returned—and returned late and sorrowful. None of the merchant's servants, none of his guests—he had spoken to all—knew anything about the man in the grey coat. The new telescope was there, but they were all ignorant whence it came. The tent and the carpet were extended on the same hill; the lackeys boasted of their master's magnificence: but none knew from what place these new valuables had come. They had administered to his pleasures; and he did not disturb his rest to inquire into their origin. Their horses were in the stalls of the young men who had rode them; and they lauded the generosity of the merchant, who had that day requested they would keep them as presents. Such was the light that Bendel threw upon this extraordinary history, and for this fruitless result received my grateful thanks. I beckoned gloomily to him that he should leave me alone. But he resumed: "I have informed you, sir, of everything connected with the affair which most interests you. I have also a message to deliver, which was given to me this morning early, by a person whom I met at the door, while I was going out on the business in which I have been so unfortunate. His own words were, "Say to Mr. Peter Schlemihl, he will see me here no more, as I am going to cross the sea; and a favourable wind beckons me to the haven. But after a year and a day I shall have the honour to seek him out, and perhaps to propose to him another arrangement which may then be to his liking. Remember me most obediently to him, and assure him of my thanks." I asked him who he was: and he replied, that you knew.

"What was the man's appearance?" I cried, full of forebodings. And Bendel described the man in the grey coat, feature by feature, word for word, precisely as he had depicted him, when inquiring about him.

"Miserable mortal!" exclaimed I, wringing my hands, "it was he! it was he himself!" He looked as if scales had fallen from his eyes. "Yes, it was he, it was indeed he!" he cried out in agony; "and I, silly, deluded one, I did not know him—I did not know him—I have betrayed my master!"

He broke out into the loudest reproaches against himself. He wept bitterly; his despair could not but excite my pity. I ministered consolation to him; assured him again and again that I did not doubt his fidelity, and sent him instantly to the haven, to follow the strange man's steps if possible. But, on that very morning, many vessels which had been kept by contrary winds back in port, had put to sea, all destined to distant lands and other climes; the grey man had disappeared trackless as a shade. . . .

FROM E. T. A. HOFFMANN,
"THE GOLDEN POT: A MODERN FAIRYTALE," 1814

"The Golden Pot" is one of the most famous of the German romantic fairy tales. Its plot defies conventional summary—the best way to describe it is to simply state that Anselmus has a series of odd and magical adventures/encounters. Greville MacDonald, in George MacDonald and His Wife, *argues that this tale is one of the key influences on MacDonald: "I cannot but think it made an arresting impression on him. It is splendid, dazzling in colour, very mad in a sort of riotous detail, but with a meaning which is stated at last when there can no longer be any need for it." Keep Greville's comment in mind as you read the ending of* Phantastes.

FIRST VIGIL

On Ascension Day, about three o'clock in the afternoon in Dresden, a young man dashed through the Schwarzthor, or Black Gate, and ran right into a basket of apples and cookies which an old and very ugly woman had set out for sale. The crash was prodigious; what wasn't squashed or broken was scattered, and hordes of street urchins delightedly divided the booty which this quick gentleman had provided for them. At the fearful shrieking which the old hag began, her fellow vendors, leaving their cake and brandy tables, surrounded the young man, and with plebian violence scolded and stormed at him. For shame and vexation he uttered no word, but merely held out his small and by no means particularly well-filled purse, which the old woman eagerly seized and stuck into her pocket.

The hostile ring of bystanders now broke; but as the young man started off, the hag called after him, "Ay, run, run your way, Devil's Bird! You'll end up in the crystal! The crystal!" The screeching harsh voice of the woman had something unearthly in it: so that the promenaders paused in amazement, and the laughter, which at first had been universal, instantly died away.

The Student Anselmus, for the young man was no other, even though he did not in the least understand these singular phrases, felt himself seized with a certain involuntary horror; and he quickened his steps still more, until he was almost running, to escape the curious looks of the multitude, all of whom were staring at him. As he made his way through the crowd of well-dressed people, he heard them muttering on all sides: "Poor young fellow! Ha! What a vicious old witch!" The mysterious words of the old woman, oddly enough, had given this ludicrous adventure a sort of sinister turn; and the youth, previously unobserved, was now regarded with a certain sympathy. The ladies, because of his fine figure and handsome face, which the glow of inward anger rendered still more expressive, forgave him his awkwardness, as well as the dress he wore, though it was at variance with all fashion. His pike-gray frock was shaped as if the tailor had known the modern style only by hearsay; and his well-kept black satin trousers gave him a certain pedagogic air, to which his gait and manner did not at all correspond.

The Student had almost reached the end of the alley which leads out to the Linkische Bath; but his breath could no longer stand such a pace. From running, he took to walking; but he still hardly dared to lift an eye from the ground, for he still saw apples and cookies dancing around him, and every kind look from this or that pretty girl seemed to him to be only a continuation of the mocking laughter at the Schwarzthor.

In this mood he reached the entrance of the Bath: groups of holiday people, one after the other, were moving in. Music of wind instruments resounded from the place, and the din of merry guests was growing louder and louder. The poor Student Anselmus was almost ready to weep; since Ascension Day had always been a family festival for him, he had hoped to participate in the felicities of the Linkische paradise; indeed, he had intended even to go to the length of a half portion of coffee with rum and a whole bottle of double beer, and he had put more money in his purse than was entirety convenient or advisable. And now, by accidentally kicking the apple-and-cookie basket, he had lost all the money he had with him. Of coffee, of double or single beer, of music, of looking at the pretty girls—in a word, of all his fancied enjoyments there was now nothing more to be said. He glided slowly past; and at last turned down the Elbe road, which at that time happened to be quite empty.

Beneath an elder-tree, which had grown out through the wall, he found a kind green resting place: here he sat down, and filled a pipe from the Sanitätsknaster, or health-tobacco-box, of which his friend the Conrector Paulmann had lately made him a present. Close before him rolled and chafed the gold-dyed waves of the fair Elbe: on the other side rose lordly Dresden, stretching, bold and proud, its light towers into the airy sky; farther off, the Elbe bent itself down towards flowery meads and fresh springing woods; and in the dim distance, a range of azure peaks gave notice of remote Bohemia. But, heedless of this, the Student Anselmus, looking gloomily before him, flew forth smoky clouds into the air. His chagrin at length became audible, and he said, “In truth, I am born to losses and crosses for all my life! That, as a boy, I could never guess the right way at Odds and Evens; that my bread and butter always fell on the buttered side—but I won’t even mention these sorrows. But now that I’ve become a student, in spite of Satan, isn’t it a frightful fate that I’m still as bumbling as ever? Can I put on a new coat without getting grease on it the first day, or without tearing a cursed hole in it on some nail or other? Can I ever bow to a Councillor or a lady without pitching the hat out of my hands, or even slipping on the smooth pavement, and taking an embarrassing fall? When I was in Halle, didn’t I have to pay three or four groschen every market day for broken crockery—the Devil putting it into my head to dash straight forward like a lemming? Have I ever got to my college, or any other place that I had an appointment to, at the right time? Did it ever matter if I set out a half hour early, and planted myself at the door, with the knocker in my hand? Just as the clock is going to strike, souse! Some devil empties a wash basin down on me, or I run into some fellow coming out, and get myself engaged in endless quarrels until the time is clean gone.

“Ah, well. Where are you fled now, you blissful dreams of coming fortune, when I proudly thought that I might even reach the height of Geheimrat? And hasn’t my evil star estranged me from my best patrons? I had heard, for instance, that the Councillor, to whom I have a letter of introduction, cannot stand hair cut close; with an immensity of trouble the barber managed to fasten a little queue to the back of my head; but at my first bow his unblessed knot comes loose, and a little dog which had been snuffing around me frisks off to the Geheimrat with the queue in its mouth. I spring after it in terror, and stumble against the table, where he has been working while at breakfast; and cups, plates, ink-glass, sandbox crash to the floor and a flood of chocolate and ink covers the report he has just been writing. ‘Is the Devil in this man?’ bellows the furious Privy Councillor, and he shoves me out of the room.

“What did it matter when Conrector Paulmann gave me hopes of copywork: will the malignant fate, which pursues me everywhere, permit it? Today even! Think of it! I intended to celebrate Ascension Day with cheerfulness of soul. I was going to stretch a point for once. I might have gone, as well as anyone else, into the Linkische Bath, and called out proudly, ‘Marqueur, a bottle of double beer; best sort, if you please.’ I might have sat till far in the evening; and moreover close by this or that fine party of well-dressed ladies. I know it, I feel it! Heart would have come into me, I should have been quite another man; nay, I might have carried it so far, that when one of them asked, 'What time is it?' or 'What is it they are playing?' I would have started up with light grace, and without overturning my glass, or stumbling over the bench, but with a graceful bow, moving a step and a half forward, I would have answered, 'Give me leave, mademoiselle! it is the overture of the Donauweibchen'; or, 'It is just going to strike six.' Could any mortal in the world have taken it ill of me? No! I say; the girls would have looked over, smiling so roguishly; as they always do when I pluck up heart to show them that I too understand the light tone of society, and know how ladies should be spoken to. And now the Devil himself leads me into that cursed apple-basket, and now I must sit moping in solitude, with nothing but a poor pipe of—"

Here the Student Anselmus was interrupted in his soliloquy by a strange rustling and whisking, which rose close by him in the grass, but soon glided up into the twigs and leaves of the elder-tree that stretched out over his head. It was as if the evening wind were shaking the leaves, as if little birds were twittering among the branches, moving their little wings in capricious flutter to and fro. Then he heard a whispering and lisping, and it seemed as if the blossoms were sounding like little crystal bells. Anselmus listened and listened. Ere long, the whispering, and lisping, and tinkling, he himself knew not how, grew to faint and half-scattered words:

"'Twixt this way, 'twixt that; 'twixt branches, 'twixt blossoms, come shoot, come twist and twirl we! Sisterkin, sisterkin! up to the shine; up, down, through and through, quick! Sunrays yellow; evening wind whispering; dewdrops pattering; blossoms all singing: sing we with branches and blossoms! Stars soon glitter; must down: 'twixt this way, 'twixt that, come shoot, come twist, come twirl we, sisterkin!"

And so it went along, in confused and confusing speech. The Student Anselmus thought:

"Well, it is only the evening wind, which tonight truly is whispering distinctly enough." But at that moment there sounded over his head, as it were, a triple harmony of clear crystal bells: he looked up, and perceived three little snakes, glittering with green and gold, twisted around the branches, and stretching out their heads to the evening sun. Then, again, began a whispering and twittering in the same words as before, and the little snakes went gliding and caressing up and down through the twigs; and while they moved so rapidly, it was as if the elder-bush were scattering a thousand glittering emeralds through the dark leaves.

"It is the evening sun sporting in the elder-bush," thought the Student Anselmus; but the bells sounded again; and Anselmus observed that one snake held out its little head to him. Through all his limbs there went a shock like electricity; he quivered in his inmost heart: he kept gazing up, and a pair of glorious dark-blue eyes were looking at him with unspeakable longing; and an unknown feeling of highest blessedness and deepest sorrow nearly rent his heart asunder. And as he looked, and still looked, full of warm desire, into those kind eyes, the crystal bells sounded louder in harmonious accord, and the glittering emeralds fell down and encircled him, flickering round him in a thousand sparkles and sporting in resplendent threads of gold. The elder-bush moved and spoke: "You lay in my shadow; my perfume flowed around you, but you understood it not. The perfume is my speech, when love kindles it." The evening wind came gliding past, and said: "I played round your temples, but you understood me not. That breath is my speech, when love kindles it." The sunbeam broke through the clouds, and the sheen of it burned, as in words: "I overflowed you, with glowing gold, but you understood me not. That glow is my speech, when love kindles it."

And, still deeper and deeper sank in the view of those glorious eyes, his longing grew keener, his desire more warm. And all rose and moved around him, as if awakening to glad life. Flowers and blossoms shed their odours round him, and their odour was like the lordly singing of a thousand softest voices, and what they sang was borne, like an echo, on the golden evening clouds, as they flitted away, into far-off lands. But as the last sunbeam abruptly sank behind the hills, and the twilight threw its veil over the scene, there came a hoarse deep voice, as from a great distance:

"Hey! hey! what chattering and jingling is that up there? Hey! hey! who catches me the ray behind the hills? Sunned enough, sung enough. Hey! hey! through bush and grass, through grass and stream. Hey! hey! Come dow-w-n, dow-w-w-n!". So the voice faded away, as in murmurs of a distant thunder; but the crystal bells broke off in sharp discords. All became mute; and the Student Anselmus observed how the three snakes, glittering and sparkling, glided through the grass towards the river; rustling and hustling, they rushed into the Elbe; and over the waves where they vanished, there crackled up a green flame, which, gleaming forward obliquely, vanished in the direction of the city. . . .

JOHN KEATS, "ODE ON MELANCHOLY," 1819

The three poems by Keats in this appendix reflect MacDonald's indebtedness to the poet, who died of consumption in1821 at age 25. Keats's theme of longing after beauty, and the realization of the impossibility of fulfilling that longing, appealed to MacDonald.

No, no! go not to Lethe, neither twist
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kist
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globèd peonies;
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:
Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

JOHN KEATS, "ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE," 1819

1.

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

2.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

3.

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

4.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

5.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

6.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

7.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:

Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

8.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

JOHN KEATS, "LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI," 1819

I.

O WHAT can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

II.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms!
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

III.

I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

IV.

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

V.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

VI.

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

VII.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
"I love thee true."

VIII.

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept, and sigh'd fill sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

IX.

And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dream'd—Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill's side.

X.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—"La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!"

XI.

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

XII.

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

FROM HEINRICH HEINE, *EXOTICS*, 1823
TRANSLATION: GEORGE MACDONALD, *RAMPOLI*, 1897

Another important German romantic writer who influenced MacDonald, Heine's art songs ("Lieder") were set to music, while his "Lyrisches Intermezzo" were poems that were placed between tragic plays.

Lieder.

IV.

Thy little hand lay on my bosom, dear:
What a knocking in that little chamber!—dost hear?
There dwelleth a carpenter evil, and he
Is hard at work on a coffin for me.

He hammers and knocks by night and by day;
'Tis long since he drove all my sleep away:
Ah, haste thee, carpenter, busy keep,
That I the sooner may go to sleep!

Lyrisches Intermezzo

XLI.

I dreamt of the daughter of a king,
  With white cheeks tear-bewetted;
We sat 'neath the lime tree's leavy ring,
  In love's embraces netted.

"I would not have thy father's throne,
  His crown or his golden sceptre;
I want my lovely princess alone—
  From Fate that so long hath kept her."

"That cannot be," she said to me:
  "I lie in the grave uncheerly;
And only at night I come to thee,
  Because I love thee so dearly."

Lyrisches Intermezzo

LXIV.

Night lay upon mine eyelids;
  Upon my mouth lay lead;
With rigid brain and bosom,
  I lay among the dead.

How long it was I know not
  That sleep oblivion gave;
I wakened up, and, listening,
  Heard a knocking at my grave.

"Tis time to rise up, Henry!
  The eternal day draws on;
The dead are all arisen—
  The eternal joy's begun."

"My love, I cannot raise me;
For I have lost my sight;
My eyes with bitter weeping
They are extinguished quite."

"From thy dear eyelids, Henry,
I'll kiss the night away;
Thou shalt behold the angels,
And Heaven's superb display."

"My love, I cannot raise me;
Still bleeds my bosom gored,
Where thou heart-deep didst stab me
With a keen-pointed word."

"Soft I will lay it, Henry,
My hand soft on thy heart;
And that will stop its bleeding
And soothe at once the smart."

"My love, I cannot raise me—
My head is bleeding too;
When thou wast stolen from me
I shot it through and through!"

"I with my tresses, Henry,
Will stop the fountain red;
Press back again the blood-stream,
And heal thy wounded head."

She begged so sweetly, dearly,
I could no more say no;
I tried, I strove to raise me,
And to my darling go.

Then the wounds again burst open;
With torrent force outbrake
From head and breast the blood-stream,
And, lo, I came awake!

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN, "THE SHADOW," 1847
TRANSLATION: M. R. JAMES, 1930

As editor of Good Words for the Young *(1869-72), MacDonald published two of Andersen's fairy tales in 1870—"The Rags" and "What the Whole Family Said." Anodos and his shadow, fortunately, do not meet a tragic end as does the learned man.*

In the hot countries the sun can burn properly. People become as brown as mahogany all over; in the very hottest countries they are even burnt into negroes—but it was only to the hot countries that a learned man from the cold ones had come. He imagined he would be able to run about as he did at home, but he soon got out of the habit of doing that. He and all sensible people had to stop indoors. The window-shutters and the doors were kept shut all day, and it looked as if the whole house were asleep or else nobody was at home. The narrow street with the tall houses, where he lived, was so built that from morning to night the sunshine lay on it; really it was unbearable. This learned man from the cold countries—he was a young man and a clever one—he felt as if he was living in a fiery furnace. It exhausted him, and he grew quite thin, and even his shadow contracted and got much smaller than it was at home; the sun exhausted it, too. Not until evening, when the sun was down, did they begin to revive.

That, now, was really a pleasure to see. As soon as lights were brought into the room the Shadow stretched itself all up the wall—yes, up to the ceiling, too, so long did it make itself, for it had to stretch itself to get its strength back. The learned man went out on the balcony, to stretch himself there, and as the stars came out in the lovely clear sky he seemed to himself to be coming to life again.

On all the balconies in the street—and in the hot countries every window has a balcony—people came out, for air one must have, even if one's accustomed to be the colour of mahogany. Very lively it became—upstairs and downstairs. Shoemakers and tailors and everybody else moved out into the street; tables and chairs were brought out and lamps lit—thousands of them—and some talked and others sang; and the people took walks, and the carriages drove out, and the donkeys with bells on them went by—"Kling-a-ling-a-ling!" There were funerals, with singing of psalms; the street-boys fired off throw-downs; the church bells rang out, and altogether it was very lively down in the street. Only in one house, straight opposite to that in which the foreign learned man lived, was there complete stillness. And yet somebody lived in it, for there were flowers on the balcony, that grew splendidly in the hot sun, which they couldn't have done without being watered, and there must be somebody to water them; so there must be people there. The door of it, too, was opened at night, but inside it was quite dark; at any rate in the front room. But from further in there was a sound of music. To the foreign scholar it seemed incomparably beautiful, but it might easily be that he fancied it so, for in the hot countries everything seemed to him matchless, but for the heat. The landlord said he didn't know who had taken the house opposite, for you couldn't see any people, and as for the music, he thought it horribly tiresome. "It's like someone sitting practising a piece he can't get on with—always the same piece. No doubt he's saying, 'I shall get it right in time', but he won't get it right, however long he goes on playing."

One night the foreign scholar woke up. The door to the balcony stood open where he slept and the curtain before it was lifted by the breeze, and he thought there was a marvellous light coming from the balcony opposite. All the flowers were shining like flames of the most lovely colours, and among the flowers stood a slender, graceful maiden; herself, too, shining, as it seemed. It positively dazzled his eyes, and he shut them as tight as ever he could, and woke up completely. With a single jump he was on the floor, and very quietly he stole behind the curtain, but the maiden was gone, the light was gone, the flowers shone no longer, though they stood there as fair as ever. The door was ajar, and from far within the music was sounding, soft and beautiful; such as would entrance one into delicious thought. It really was like magic—and who was it that lived there? Where was the proper entrance? The whole ground floor was a succession of shops, and people couldn't always be passing through them.

One evening the foreign scholar was sitting out on his balcony, and a lamp was hung in the room behind him, and so it very naturally happened that his shadow passed across to the wall opposite, and there it stayed, right opposite among the flowers on the balcony, and when the learned man moved the shadow moved, too—it always does.

"I think my Shadow is the only living thing to be seen over there," said the learned man. "Look how snug it's sitting among the flowers, and the door's standing ajar. Now if only the Shadow was sharp enough to go in and look about and then come and tell me what it saw! Yes, you'd be some use then," he said in joke. "Do, please, go in there! Do! Are you going?" With that he nodded to the Shadow, and the Shadow nodded back. “Well, go then, but don’t stay away!” The learned man got up and his Shadow, on the balcony opposite, got up too. The learned man turned, and the Shadow turned too, and if anyone had been observing carefully, they would have seen, quite plain, that the Shadow went in by the half-open door of the balcony over the way, at the moment when the learned man went into his own room and let fall the long curtain behind him.

Next morning the learned man went out to take his coffee and read the papers. “What’s this?” he said, when he came out into the sunshine. “I haven’t got any shadow! Why, then it really did go away last night and has not come back; that’s rather tiresome, that is.”

It did annoy him, but not so much because his shadow was gone, as because he knew that there was a story about a man without a shadow which everyone at home in the cold countries knew; and if the learned man went there and told them his own story they would say he was merely imitating the other, and that he had no business to do. So he determined to say nothing at all about it, which was very sensible of him.

In the evening he went out on to his balcony again; he had put the lamp behind him, very properly, for he knew that a shadow always needs its master for a screen, but he couldn’t entice it back. He made himself little and he made himself big, but no shadow came, nobody came. He coughed loudly, but it was no good.

It was amazing, to be sure; but in those hot countries everything grows very fast, and after a week had passed he saw, to his great delight, that a new shadow was growing out of his feet when he went into the sunlight: the root must have been left behind. In three weeks’ time he had a very tolerable shadow, which, when he betook himself home to the northern country, grew more and more on the way, so that at last it was so long and so big that he would have been contented with half as much.

So the learned man came home and wrote books about what there was of truth and goodness and beauty in the world; and days passed by, and years—many years.

He was sitting in his room one evening, and there came a very gentle knock at the door. “Come in!” said he; but nobody came in, so he opened the door, and there standing before him was an extraordinarily thin man, so thin as to be quite remarkable. This person was, for the rest, extremely well dressed, and evidently a man of distinction.

“Whom have I the honour of addressing?” asked the learned man.

"Ah, I thought very likely you wouldn't recognize me," said the well-dressed man. "I've become so much of a body that I've actually got flesh and clothes; you never expected to see me in such fine condition. Don't you recognize your old shadow? To be sure, you certainly never thought I should ever come back. Things have gone wonderfully well with me since I was with you last, and I have become very well-to-do in every respect. If I wish to buy myself out of service, I have the means." And he rattled a large bunch of valuable seals that hung to his watch, and put his hand to the heavy gold chain that was round his neck: and how his fingers did glitter with diamond rings, and all real too!

"Well, well! I can't get over it," said the learned man. "What does it all mean?"

"I admit, it's by no means an ordinary affair," said the Shadow. "But, then, you yourself are not an ordinary man; and I, as you very well know, have trod in your footsteps from a child. As soon as you found that I was ripe to go out into the world by myself, I went my own way. I am now in the most brilliant circumstances, but there came a sort of longing over me to see you once more before you die, as die you must. I wanted, too, to see this part of the world again, for one has always a fondness for one's Fatherland. I am aware that you have got another shadow in my place; if I have anything to pay, either to it or to you, I hope you will be so good as to let me know."

"Well, and is it really you?" said the scholar. "It is indeed most remarkable! I could never have believed that my old shadow could come back to me as a man."

"Do tell me what I have to pay," said the Shadow; "I don't at all like to be in debt of any kind."

"How can you talk so?" said the learned man. "What debt is there to talk of? Be as free as the next man; I am extraordinarily pleased at your good fortune. Do sit down, old friend, and just tell me a little about how it all came about, and what you saw at the house over the way, out there in the hot country."

"I will tell you," said the Shadow, seating himself; "but you must promise me that you won't tell anyone here in the town, wherever you may meet me, that I was once your Shadow. I have some thoughts of becoming engaged. I could support more families than one."

"Be quite easy," said the scholar; "I won't tell anyone who you really are. Here's my hand on it. I promise it, and one man, one word, you know." "One word, one shadow," said the Shadow; he was obliged to phrase it so.

It was indeed most remarkable to see how much of a man the Shadow was: all dressed out in the finest possible black broadcloth, with varnished boots and a hat that would shut up so that it was only crown and brim, not to speak of what we know already, the seals, the gold chain, and the diamond rings. The Shadow was, in fact, extraordinarily well dressed, and this was just what made him a complete man.

"Now I'll tell you my story," said the Shadow, planting his feet, in the varnished boots, as firmly as he could on the arm of the learned man's new shadow, which lay at his feet like a poodle dog: and this was either out of pride or perhaps in hopes of getting it to stick to him; while the prostrate shadow kept very quiet in order to listen, for it wanted to know how a shadow could get free as this one had done, and work up to be its own master.

"Do you know who it was that lived in the house over the way?" said the Shadow. "It was the most beautiful thing there is: it was Poetry. I was there for three weeks, and the effect was the same as if one had spent three thousand years in reading everything that has been sung and written. I say it, and it is the truth. I have seen everything, and I know everything."

"Poetry!" cried the learned man. "Yes! Yes! She often dwells, a hermit, in great cities. Poetry! I saw her for one single brief moment, but my eyes were full of sleep. She was standing on the balcony and shining as the Northern Lights shine. Tell me, tell me of her. Thou wast on the balcony, thou wentest through the door, then—" "Then I was in the ante-room," said the Shadow. "You were always sitting looking across at the ante-room. There was no light there at all; there was a sort of twilight, but one door stood open, leading straight to a second, and into a long row of rooms and halls. There was light there. I should have been killed outright by the light, had I gone in to where the maiden was, but I was careful, I gave myself time—as indeed one must."

"And what sawest thou then?" asked the scholar.

"I saw everything, and I will tell you about it. But—it isn't that I'm in the least proud—but considering I'm a free man, and what accomplishments I possess, not to mention my good position and my very easy circumstances—I should very much prefer you to address me as 'you'."

"I beg your pardon," said the scholar; "it's merely old habit which sticks by me. You're perfectly right, and I shall keep it in mind. But now, do tell me everything you saw."

"Everything!" said the Shadow. "For I saw everything and I know everything."

"What was it like in the innermost hall?" asked the scholar. "Was it like being in the green wood? Was it like a solemn temple? Were the halls like the starlit sky seen from the top of the high mountains?" "Everything was there," said the Shadow; "I didn't go absolutely in, I stayed in the room next to it in the twilight, but I was admirably placed, and saw everything and know everything. I have been in the court of Poetry, in the ante-chamber."

"But what did you see? Did all the gods of ancient days pass through the vast halls? Did the heroes of old times fight their battles there? Were there lovely children playing and telling of their dreams?"

"I tell you I was there, and you may imagine I saw everything there was to be seen. Had you been over there you would not have turned into a man, but I did; and, moreover, I learned to know my innermost nature, all that was inborn in me, the kinship I had with Poetry. When I was with you I never thought about it, but, as you know, every time the sun rose or set I used to become amazingly large. In the moonlight, indeed, I was almost plainer to be seen than you yourself. At that time I did not comprehend my own nature, but in that ante-room it became clear to me; I became a man. When I came out I was matured, but you were no longer in the hot countries. I was ashamed, as a man, to go about as I was. I needed boots and clothes and all the human paraphernalia that make a man recognizable. I made my way (I tell you this, you won't put it in a book), I made my way to the cake-woman's skirt, and hid myself under it. Little did the woman think how great a thing she had in hiding, and not till the evening did I come out. I ran along the street in the moonlight. I stretched myself right up the wall (it tickles one in the back deliciously). I ran up, I ran down; I peeped through the topmost windows, into the rooms, on to the roof. I peeped where no one else could, and saw what nobody else saw, and what nobody was meant to see. Take it all round, the world's a mean place. I wouldn't have become a man if it hadn't been generally assumed that it's a good thing to be one. I saw the most incredible things, among wives, among husbands, among parents and among those darling admirable children. I saw", said the Shadow, "what no human being was allowed to know, but what everybody very much wants to know, that is their neighbours' wrongdoings. If I'd written a newspaper it would have been read, I tell you! But I wrote direct to the people concerned, and there was a panic in every town I visited. They were terribly afraid of me, and they became amazingly fond of me.

The professors made me a professor, the tailors gave me new clothes. I'm admirably fitted out. The master of the mint coined money for me, and the women said I was very good-looking. In this way I became the man I am. And now I must bid you good-bye. Here's my card; I live on the sunny side, and I'm always at home when it rains." And off went the Shadow.

"That is a most remarkable affair," said the learned man.

A year and a day passed, and the Shadow came again. "How goes it?" he asked.

"Alas!" said the learned man. "I write about the true and the good and the beautiful. But nobody cares to hear about such things, and I'm quite in despair. I feel it very keenly."

"But I don't," said the Shadow; "I'm getting fat and that's what everybody ought to try to be. You don't understand the way of the world, you know; you'll get quite ill like this, you ought to travel. I'm going to travel this summer; will you come with me? I should like to have a companion; will you go with me as my shadow? It'll be a real pleasure to have you with me, and I'll pay expenses."

"That's going a bit too far," said the learned man.

"Why, that's as you take it," said the Shadow. "It'll do you all the good in the world to travel. If you'll be my shadow you shan't have a penny to pay for the trip."

"That's absolute madness!" said the learned man.

"But after all, the world's like that," said the Shadow, "and so it always will be." And off he went.

The learned man was in a bad way: sorrow and trouble were on him, and as for his talk about the true and the beautiful and the good, most people appreciated it as a cow does roses. At last he became quite ill. "You really look like a shadow," people said to him; and the learned man shivered, for it was exactly what he was thinking.

"You ought to take some baths," said the Shadow, who paid him a visit. "There's nothing else for it. I'll take you with me for old acquaintance sake. I'll pay expenses, and you shall write a description and amuse me with it on the journey. I'm going to the baths, for my beard won't grow as it should, and that is an ailment; one must have a beard. Now do be reasonable and accept my invitation; we'll travel as friends."

So they set off. The Shadow was the master and the master was the shadow. They drove together, they rode and walked together side by side or in front or behind, according as the sun shone. The Shadow was always careful to keep in the master's place, and the learned man didn't really think much about that; he was a very good soul, extremely kind and friendly. And so one day said he to the Shadow: "As we've become travelling companions (as we are) and as we've grown up together from childhood, wouldn't it be nice to drink brotherhood, and call each other 'thou'. It's more sociable, isn't it?"

"Now you're talking," said the Shadow (who was in fact the master). "What you say is very frank and very well meant. I'll be equally frank and well meaning. You as a scholar know very well what an odd thing Nature is. Some people can't bear to touch brown paper, it makes them sick; others feel it all over their body when someone scratches a pane of glass with a nail. Now I get just that sensation when I hear you say 'thou' to me. I feel absolutely as if I were crushed down on the ground, as I was in my first situation with you. You understand, it's merely a sensation, not pride at all. I can't bear you saying 'thou' to me, but I'll gladly say 'thou' to you; and that's meeting you halfway."

So the Shadow addressed his former master as "thou."

"Upon my word, it's rather much," thought the learned man, "that I should have to say 'you' and he should say 'thou'." But he had to put up with it.

Eventually they came to a watering-place where there were a number of visitors, and among them a beautiful Princess, who was suffering from the complaint of seeing too well; which is, of course, very distressing.

She noticed at once that the newcomer was a very different sort of person from all the rest. "People say he has come here to get his beard to grow, but I can see the real reason. He can't cast a shadow."

Her curiosity was roused, and very soon she got into conversation with the strange gentleman, on the promenade. Being a Princess, she did not need to beat about the bush, so she said: "What's the matter with you is that you can't cast a shadow."

"Your Royal Highness must be considerably better," said the Shadow. "I am aware that your complaint is that you see too well; but it has yielded, and you are cured. I have, in fact, a quite unusual shadow. Do you see the person who always goes about with me? Other people have an ordinary shadow, but I don't care about what is ordinary. You give your servant finer clothes for his livery than you wear yourself, and just so I have had my shadow smartened up into a man. What's more, you can see that I have even given him a shadow. It costs money, but I do like to have something peculiar to myself."

"What!" thought the Princess. "Can I really have recovered?

These baths are the best that exist! Waters certainly have an amazing power in these days. Still, I shan't go away; it's becoming lively here. I have an extraordinary liking for that stranger. I only hope his beard won't grow, for he'll go away if it does."

In the evening the Princess and the Shadow danced together in the great ball-room. She was light, but he was lighter, and such a partner she had never had. She told him what country she came from, and he knew it; he had been there, but at a time when she was not at home. He had peeped in at windows, upstairs and downstairs, and seen one thing and another, and so he could answer the Princess's questions and give her information that quite astounded her. He must be the wisest man on earth, she thought, and she conceived the greatest respect for his knowledge; and when they danced together a second time she fell in love with him. Of this the Shadow was well aware, for she gazed at him as if she would see through him. Yet once again they danced together, and she was on the point of speaking out. But she was careful. She thought of her country and realm and the many people she had to govern. "Wise he is," she thought to herself; "and that is a good point. He dances beautifully, and that's another. But is his knowledge thorough? That's equally important; that must be sifted." So she began very gradually to put to him some of the very most difficult questions, things she couldn't have answered herself, and the Shadow pulled a very odd face.

"Can't you answer me that?" asked the Princess.

"That was part of my nursery lessons," said the Shadow. "I really believe my shadow there behind the door can answer that."

"Your shadow?" said the Princess. "That would be most remarkable."

"Well, I don't say for certain that he can," said the Shadow, "but I think it, seeing he has been following me and listening to me all these years—I do think it. But your Royal Highness will permit me to call your attention to the fact that he takes such pride in passing for a man, that if he's to be in the right temper (as he must be to answer properly), he must be treated exactly like a man." "I'm perfectly agreeable to that," said the Princess. So she went across to the learned man at the door and talked to him about the sun and the moon, and about human nature, both outward and inward, and he answered her most wisely and well.

"What a man must he be who has so wise a shadow!" thought she. "It would be a real blessing for my people and my realm if I chose him for my consort. I will!"

And very soon they were agreed, the Princess and the Shadow, but no one was to know of it till she got back to her own kingdom.

"No one, not even my shadow," said the Shadow, who had his own thoughts about the matter.

And now they were in the country over which the Princess ruled when she was at home.

"Listen, my good friend," said the Shadow to the learned man. "I am now become as fortunate and as powerful as anyone can be, and now I will do something special for you. You shall always live with me in the palace, and drive out with me in my royal coach, and you shall have a hundred thousand rix-dollars a year. But you must allow yourself to be called a shadow by everyone, you must never say that you were at one time a man, and once a year, when I sit on the balcony in the sunshine and allow myself to be looked at, you must lie at my feet as a shadow ought to do. I may as well tell you that I am going to marry the Princess. The wedding is to take place this evening."

"No, no! That is really too much," said the learned man. "I won't allow it. I won't do it! It's deceiving the whole country and the Princess too. I shall tell the whole story—that I am the man and you are the shadow; you're only dressed up."

"Nobody will believe it," said the Shadow. "Do be reasonable, or I shall call the guard."

"I shall go straight to the Princess," said the learned man. "But I shall go first," said the Shadow, "and you'll go to prison." And there he had to go, for the sentries obeyed the one whom they knew the Princess was to marry.

"You are all in a tremble," said the Princess, when the Shadow came into her room. "Has anything happened? You mustn't be ill to-night; we're going to be married."

"I have had the most terrible experience that can occur to anyone," said the Shadow. "Only think of it—to be sure, a poor shadow's brain isn't equal to the strain—only think, my shadow has gone mad! He believes that he is the man and that I—just think of it—am his shadow!"

"That is awful," said the Princess; "I hope he is shut up?"

"Indeed he is. I'm afraid he'll never get the better of it."

"Poor shadow," said the Princess; "it's most unfortunate for him. It would really be a kindness to rid him of his little bit of life: indeed, when I come to think of it, I do believe it is essential that he should be quite quietly put out of the way."

"It's really very hard!" said the Shadow. "He was a faithful servant to me," and with that he seemed to sigh.

"You are a noble character," said the Princess.

That evening the whole town was illuminated, and the cannons went off "Boom!" And the soldiers presented arms. It *was* a wedding, to be sure! The Princess and the Shadow went out on the balcony to show themselves and receive one last "Hurrah!"

The learned man heard nothing of all this, for he had already been executed.

Appendix D:
Fantasy and Realism in the Nineteenth Century

Nathaniel Hawthorne published *The Scarlet Letter* in 1850. In "The Custom House," a long essay introducing the novel, Hawthorne takes pains to define the kind of literature he is writing—a romance. In that essay, he argues that romance occupies a "neutral territory" where "the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet" (see Appendix D). Hawthorne's romance followed in the tradition of Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), who wrote some of the most popular romance novels of the early nineteenth century, including *Waverley* (1814), *Rob Roy* (1817), *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818), and *Ivanhoe* (1820). Scott's work was in direct opposition to the novels of Jane Austen (1775-1817), who promoted a fidelity to the actual in her marriage plots (a kind of romance) in *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), and *Emma* (1815), all published during her lifetime. This tension between romance (which included fairy tales and fantasy) and realism generated much critical debate, especially with the popularity of German romance writers in England. In his 1847 review of *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë, George Henry Lewes praises the novel because "it reads like a page out of one's own life"; in fact, Lewes contends that "Reality—deep, significant reality—is the great characteristic of the book." Lewes was in a relationship with Mary Ann Evans (1819-1880), most famously known as George Eliot, who wrote *Middlemarch* (1871-72), a novel certainly centered in the realistic tradition. "Art always aims at the representation of Reality," wrote Lewes in his *Jane Eyre* review, for "Realism is . . . the basis of all Art." *Phantastes* certainly challenged the notions of realism, taking the impulse of romance and extending it into Fairy Land. With the popularity, however, of the Brothers Grimm's fairy tales (which were first translated into English in 1823), and of Hans Christian Andersen's *Eventyr* ("fantastic tales" translated in 1846), the Victorians were fed a diet of the real and the fantastic, which led to critical debate, as seen in the appendix material.

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FROM NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, "THE CUSTOM-HOUSE," *THE SCARLET LETTER*, 1850

But the object that most drew my attention to the mysterious package was a certain affair of fine red cloth, much worn and faded. There were traces about it of gold embroidery, which, however, was greatly frayed and defaced, so that none, or very little, of the glitter was left. It had been wrought, as was easy to perceive, with wonderful skill of needlework; and the stitch (as I am assured by ladies conversant with such mysteries) gives evidence of a now forgotten art, not to be discovered even by the process of picking out the threads. This rag of scarlet cloth—for time, and wear, and a sacrilegious moth had reduced it to little other than a rag—on careful examination, assumed the shape of a letter.

It was the capital letter A. By an accurate measurement, each limb proved to be precisely three inches and a quarter in length. It had been intended, there could be no doubt, as an ornamental article of dress; but how it was to be worn, or what rank, honour, and dignity, in by-past times, were signified by it, was a riddle which (so evanescent are the fashions of the world in these particulars) I saw little hope of solving. And yet it strangely interested me. My eyes fastened themselves upon the old scarlet letter, and would not be turned aside. Certainly there was some deep meaning in it most worthy of interpretation, and which, as it were, streamed forth from the mystic symbol, subtly communicating itself to my sensibilities, but evading the analysis of my mind.

When thus perplexed—and cogitating, among other hypotheses, whether the letter might not have been one of those decorations which the white men used to contrive in order to take the eyes of Indians—I happened to place it on my breast. It seemed to me—the reader may smile, but must not doubt my word—it seemed to me, then, that I experienced a sensation not altogether physical, yet almost so, as of burning heat, and as if the letter were not of red cloth, but red-hot iron. I shuddered, and involuntarily let it fall upon the floor. . . .

It was not merely during the three hours and a half which Uncle Sam claimed as his share of my daily life that this wretched numbness held possession of me. It went with me on my sea-shore walks and rambles into the country, whenever—which was seldom and reluctantly—I bestirred myself to seek that invigorating charm of Nature which used to give me such freshness and activity of thought, the moment that I stepped across the threshold of the Old Manse.

The same torpor, as regarded the capacity for intellectual effort, accompanied me home, and weighed upon me in the chamber which I most absurdly termed my study. Nor did it quit me when, late at night, I sat in the deserted parlour, lighted only by the glimmering coal-fire and the moon, striving to picture forth imaginary scenes, which, the next day, might flow out on the brightening page in many-hued description.

If the imaginative faculty refused to act at such an hour, it might well be deemed a hopeless case. Moonlight, in a familiar room, falling so white upon the carpet, and showing all its figures so distinctly—making every object so minutely visible, yet so unlike a morning or noontide visibility—is a medium the most suitable for a romance-writer to get acquainted with his illusive guests. There is the little domestic scenery of the well-known apartment; the chairs, with each its separate individuality; the centre-table, sustaining a work-basket, a volume or two, and an extinguished lamp; the sofa; the book-case; the picture on the wall—all these details, so completely seen, are so spiritualised by the unusual light, that they seem to lose their actual substance, and become things of intellect. Nothing is too small or too trifling to undergo this change, and acquire dignity thereby. A child's shoe; the doll, seated in her little wicker carriage; the hobby-horse—whatever, in a word, has been used or played with during the day is now invested with a quality of strangeness and remoteness, though still almost as vividly present as by daylight. Thus, therefore, the floor of our familiar room has become a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other. Ghosts might enter here without affrighting us. It would be too much in keeping with the scene to excite surprise, were we to look about us and discover a form, beloved, but gone hence, now sitting quietly in a streak of this magic moonshine, with an aspect that would make us doubt whether it had returned from afar, or had never once stirred from our fireside.

The somewhat dim coal fire has an essential influence in producing the effect which I would describe. It throws its unobtrusive tinge throughout the room, with a faint ruddiness upon the walls and ceiling, and a reflected gleam upon the polish of the furniture. This warmer light mingles itself with the cold spirituality of the moonbeams, and communicates, as it were, a heart and sensibilities of human tenderness to the forms which fancy summons up. It converts them from snow-images into men and women. Glancing at the looking-glass, we behold—deep within its haunted verge—the smouldering glow of the half-extinguished anthracite, the white moon-beams on the floor, and a repetition of all the gleam and shadow of the picture, with one remove further from the actual, and nearer to the imaginative. Then, at such an hour, and with this scene before him, if a man, sitting all alone, cannot dream strange things, and make them look like truth, he need never try to write romances. . . .

FROM NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, "PREFACE," *THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES*, 1851

When a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume had he professed to be writing a Novel. The latter form of composition is presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience. The former—while, as a work of art, it must rigidly subject itself to laws, and while it sins unpardonably so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart—has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation. If he think fit, also, he may so manage his atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the lights and deepen and enrich the shadows of the picture. He will be wise, no doubt, to make a very moderate use of the privileges here stated, and, especially, to mingle the Marvelous rather as a slight, delicate, and evanescent flavor, than as any portion of the actual substance of the dish offered to the public. He can hardly be said, however, to commit a literary crime even if he disregard this caution. . . .

Charles Dickens,
"Frauds on the Fairies," *Household Words*, October, 1853

Dickens was the most popular novelist of the nineteenth century—and maybe the most influential. He was also a fan of fairy tales, including The Arabian Nights*. In "Frauds on the Fairies" Dickens satirizes the didactic fairy tale, particularly those tales being written by his once-illustrator George Cruikshank. Dickens's essay can also be seen as a diatribe against overtly moral fiction—didactic fiction—the kind MacDonald often wrote in his realistic novels. Harry Stone in* Dickens and the Invisible World *(Indiana UP, 1979) boldly states that most Dickens novels use the fairy tale for structural and thematic concerns, which can be seen in the excerpts from* Hard Times *and the interpolated fairy tale from* Little Dorrit.

We must assume that we are not singular in entertaining a very great tenderness for the fairy literature of our childhood. What enchanted us then, and is captivating a million of young fancies now, has, at the same blessed time of life, enchanted vast hosts of men women who have done their long day's work and laid their grey heads down to rest would be hard to estimate the amount of gentleness and mercy that has made its way among us through these slight channels. Forbearance, courtesy, consideration for poor and aged, kind treatment of animals, love of nature, abhorrence of tyranny and brute force—many such good things have been first nourished in the child's heart this powerful aid. It has greatly helped keep us, in some sense, ever young, by preserving through our worldly ways one slender track not overgrown with weeds, where we may walk with children, sharing their lights.

In an utilitarian age, of all other times, it is a matter of grave importance that Fairy tales should be respected. Our English red tape is too magnificently red ever to be employed in the tying up of such trifles, but everyone who has considered the subject knows full well that a nation without fancy, without some romance, never did, never can, never will, hold a great place under the sun. The theatre, having done its worst to destroy these admirable fictions—having in a most exemplary manner destroyed itself, its artists, and its audiences, in that perversion of its duty—it becomes doubly important that the little books themselves, nurseries of fancy as they are, should be preserved. To preserve them in their usefulness, they must be as much preserved in their simplicity, and purity, and innocent extravagance, as if they were actual fact. Whosoever alters them to suit his own opinions, whatever they are, is guilty, to our thinking, of an act of presumption, and appropriates to himself what does not belong to him.

We have lately observed, with pain, intrusion of a Whole Hog of unwieldy dimensions into the fairy flower garden. The rooting of the animal among the roses would in itself have awakened in us nothing but indignation; our pain arises from his being violently driven in by a man of genius, our own beloved friend, MR. GEORGE CRUIKSHANK. That incomparable artist is, of all men, the last who should lay his exquisite hand on fairy text. In his own art he understands it so perfectly, and illustrates it so beautifully, so humorously, so wisely, that he should never lay down his etching needle to "edit" the Ogre, to whom with that little instrument he can render such extraordinary justice. But, to "editing" Ogres, and Hop-o'-my-thumbs, and their families, our dear moralist has in a rash moment taken, as a means of propagating the doctrines of Total Abstinence, Prohibition of the sale of spirituous liquors, Free Trade, and Popular Education. For the introduction of these topics he has altered the text of a fairy story; and against his right to do any such thing we protest with all our might and main. Of his likewise altering it to advertise that excellent series of plates, "The Bottle," we say nothing more than that we foresee a new and improved edition of Goody Two Shoes, edited by E. Moses and Son; of the Dervish with the box of ointment, edited by Professor Holloway; and of Jack and the Beanstalk edited by Mary Wedlake, the popular authoress of Do you bruise your oats yet.

Now, it makes not the least difference to our objection whether we agree or disagree with our worthy friend, Mr. Cruikshank, in the opinions he interpolates upon an old fairy story. Whether good or bad in themselves, they are, in that relation, like the famous definition of a weed; a thing growing up in a wrong place. He has no greater moral justification in altering the harmless little books than we should have in altering his best etchings. If such a precedent were followed we must soon become disgusted with the old stories into which modern personages so obtruded themselves, and the stories themselves must soon be lost. With seven Blue Beards in the field, each coming at a gallop from his own platform mounted on a foaming hobby a generation or two hence would not know which was which, and the great original Blue Beard would be confounded with the counterfeits. Imagine a Total Abstinence edition of Robinson Crusoe, with the rum left out. Imagine a Peace edition, with the gunpowder left out, and the rum left in. Imagine a Vegetarian edition, with the goat's flesh left out. Imagine a Kentucky edition, to introduce a flogging of that 'tarnal old nigger Friday, twice a week. Imagine an Aborigines Protection Society edition, to deny cannibalism and make Robinson embrace the amiable savages whenever they landed. Robinson Crusoe would be "edited" out of his island in a hundred years, and the island would be swallowed up in the editorial ocean.

Among the other learned professions we have now the Platform profession, chiefly exercised by a new and meritorious class of commercial travellers who go about to take the sense of meetings on various articles: some, of a very superior description: some, not quite so good. Let us write the story of Cinderella, "edited" by one of these gentlemen, doing a good stroke of business, and having a rather extensive mission.

ONCE upon a time, a rich man and his wife were the parents of a lovely daughter. She was a beautiful child, and became, at her own desire, a member of the Juvenile Bands of Hope when she was only four years of age. When this child was only nine years of age her mother died, and all the Juvenile Bands of Hope in her district—the Central district, number five hundred and twenty-seven—formed in a procession of two and two, amounting to fifteen hundred, and followed her to the grave, singing chorus Number forty-two, "O come," &c. This grave was outside the town, and under the direction of the Local Board of Health; which reported at certain stated intervals to the General Board of Health, Whitehall.

The motherless little girl was very sorrowful for the loss of her mother, and so was her father too, at first; but, after a year was over, he married again—a very cross widow lady, with two proud tyrannical daughters as cross as herself. He was aware that he could have made his marriage with this lady a civil process by simply making a declaration before a Registrar; but he was averse to this course on religious grounds, and, being a member of the Montgolfian persuasion, was married according to the ceremonies of that respectable church by Reverend Jared Jocks, who improved the occasion.

He did not live long with his disagreeable wife. Having been shamefully accustomed to shave with warm water instead of cold, which he ought to have used (see Medical Appendix B. and C.), his undermined constitution could not bear up against her temper, and he soon died. Then, this orphan was cruelly treated by her stepmother and the two daughters, and was forced to do the dirtiest of kitchen work; to scour the saucepans, wash the dishes, and light the fires—which did not consume their own smoke, but emitted a dark vapour prejudicial to the bronchial tubes. The only warm place in the house where she was free from ill-treatment was the kitchen chimney-corner; and as she used to sit down there, among the cinders, when her work was done, the proud fine sisters gave her the name of Cinderella.

About this time, the King of the land, who never made war against anybody, and allowed everybody to make war against him—which was the reason why his subjects were the greatest manufacturers on earth, and always lived in security and peace—gave a great feast, which was to last two days. This splendid banquet was to consist entirely of artichokes and gruel; and from among those who were invited to it, and to hear the delightful speeches after dinner, the King's son was to choose a bride for himself. The proud fine sisters were invited, but nobody knew anything about poor Cinderella, and she was to stay at home.

She was so sweet-tempered, however, that she assisted the haughty creatures to dress, and bestowed her admirable taste upon them as freely as if they had been kind to her. Neither did she laugh when they broke seventeen stay-laces in dressing; for, although she wore no stays herself, being sufficiently acquainted with the anatomy of the human figure to be aware of the destructive effects of tight-lacing, she always reserved her opinions on that subject for the Regenerative Record (price three halfpence in a neat wrapper), which all good people take in, and to which she was a Contributor.

At length the wished for moment arrived, and the proud fine sisters swept away to the feast and speeches, leaving Cinderella in the chimney-corner. But, she could always occupy her mind with the general question of the Ocean Penny Postage, and she had in her pocket an unread Oration on that subject, made by the well known Orator, Nehemiah Nicks. She was lost in the fervid eloquence that talented Apostle when she became aware of the presence of one of those female relatives which (it may not be generally known) it is not lawful for a man to marry. I allude to her grandmother.

"Why so solitary, my child?" said the old lady to Cinderella.

"Alas, grandmother," returned the poor girl, "my sisters have gone to the feast and speeches, and here sit I in the ashes, Cinderella!"

"Never," cried the old lady with animation, "shall one of the Band of Hope despair! Run into the garden, my dear, and fetch me an American Pumpkin! American, because some parts of that independent country, there are prohibitory laws against the sale of alcoholic drinks in any form. Also, because America produced (among many great pumpkins) the glory of her sex, Mrs. Colonel Bloomer.

None but an American Pumpkin will do, my child."

Cinderella ran into the garden, and brought the largest American pumpkin she could find. This virtuously democratic vegetable her grandmother immediately changed into a splendid coach. Then, she sent her for mice from the mouse-trap, which she changed into prancing horses, free from the obnoxious and oppressive post-horse duty. Then, to the rat- trap in the stable for a rat, which she changed to a state-coachman, not amenable to the iniquitous assessed taxes. Then, to look behind a watering-pot for six lizards, which she changed into six footmen, each with a petition in his hand ready to present to the Prince, signed by fifty thousand persons, in favour of the early closing movement.

"But grandmother," said Cinderella, stopping in the midst of her delight, and looking at her clothes, "how can I go to the palace in these miserable rags?"

"Be not uneasy about that, my dear," returned her grandmother.

Upon which the old lady touched her with her wand, her rags disappeared, and she was beautifully dressed. Not in the present costume of the female sex, which has been proved to be at once grossly immodest and absurdly inconvenient, but in rich sky-blue satin pantaloons gathered at the ankle, a puce-coloured satin pelisse sprinkled with silver flowers, and a very broad Leghorn hat. The hat was chastely ornamented with a rainbow-coloured ribbon hanging in two bell-pulls down the back; the pantaloons were ornamented with a golden stripe; and the effect of the whole was unspeakably sensible, feminine, and retiring. Lastly, the old lady put on Cinderella's feet a pair of shoes made of glass: observing that but for the abolition of the duty on that article, it never could have been devoted to such a purpose; the effect of all such taxes being to cramp invention, and embarrass the producer, to the manifest injury of the consumer. When the old lady had made these wise remarks, she dismissed Cinderella to the feast and speeches, charging her by no means to remain after twelve o'clock at night.

The arrival of Cinderella at the Monster Gathering produced a great excitement. As a delegate from the United States had just moved that the King do take the chair, as the motion had been seconded and carried unanimously, the King himself could not go forth to receive her. But His Royal Highness the Prince (who was to move the second resolution), went to the door to hand from her carriage. This virtuous Prince, being completely covered from head to foot with Total Abstinence Medals, shone as if he were attired in complete armour; while the inspiring strains of the Peace Brass Band in the gallery (composed of the Lambkin Family, eighteen in number, who cannot be too much encouraged) awakened additional enthusiasm.

The King's son handed Cinderella to one of the reserved seats for pink tickets, on the platform, and fell in love with her immediately. His appetite deserted him; he scarcely tasted his artichokes, and merely trifled with his gruel. When the speeches began, and Cinderella, wrapped in the eloquence of the two inspired delegates who occupied the entire evening in speaking to the first Resolution, occasionally cried, "Hear, hear!" the sweetness of her voice completed her conquest of the Prince's heart. But, indeed the whole male portion of the assembly loved her—and doubtless would have done so, even if she had been less beautiful, in consequence of the contrast which her dress presented to the bold and ridiculous garments of the other ladies.

At a quarter before twelve the second inspired delegate having drunk all the water in the decanter, and fainted away, the King put the question, "That this Meeting do now adjourn until to-morrow." Those who were of that opinion holding up their hands, and then those who were of the contrary, theirs, there appeared an immense majority in favour of the resolution which was consequently carried. Cinderella got home in safety, and heard nothing all that night, or all next day, but the praises of the unknown lady with the sky-blue satin pantaloons.

When the time for the feast and speeches came round again, the cross stepmother and the proud fine daughters went out in good time to secure their places. As soon as they were gone, Cinderella's grandmother returned and changed her as before. Amid a blast of welcome from the Lambkin family, she was again handed to the pink seat on the platform by His Royal Highness.

This gifted Prince was a powerful speaker, and had the evening before him. He rose at precisely ten minutes before eight, and was greeted with tumultuous cheers and waving of handkerchiefs. When the excitement had in some degree subsided, he proceeded to address the meeting: who were never tired of listening to speeches, as no good people ever are. He held them enthralled for four hours and a quarter. Cinderella forgot the time, and hurried away so when she heard the first stroke of twelve, that her beautiful dress changed back to her old rags at the door, and she left one of her glass shoes behind. The Prince took it up, and vowed—that is, made a declaration before a magistrate; for he objected on principle to the multiplying of oaths—that he would only marry the charming creature to whom that shoe belonged.

He accordingly caused an advertisement to that effect to be inserted in all the newspapers: for, the advertisement duty, an impost most unjust in principle and most unfair in operation, did not exist in that country; neither was the stamp on newspapers known in that land—which had as many newspapers as the United States, and got as much good out of them. Innumerable ladies answered the advertisement and pretended that the shoe was theirs; but, every one of them was unable to get her foot into it. The proud fine sisters answered it, and tried their feet with no greater success. Then, Cinderella, who had answered it too, came forward amidst their scornful jeers, and the shoe slipped on in a moment. It is a remarkable tribute to the improved and sensible fashion of the dress her grandmother had given her, that if she had not worn it the Prince would probably never have seen her feet.

The marriage was solemnized with great rejoicing. When the honeymoon was over, the King retired from public life, and was succeeded by the Prince. Cinderella, being now a queen, applied herself to the government of the country on enlightened, liberal, and free principles. All the people who ate anything she did not eat, or who drank anything she did not drink, were imprisoned for life. All the newspaper offices from which any doctrine proceeded that was not her doctrine, were burnt down. All the public speakers proved to demonstration that if there were any individual on the face of the earth who differed from them in anything, that individual was a designing ruffian and an abandoned monster. She also threw open the right of voting, and of being elected to public offices and of making the laws, to the whole of her sex; who thus came to be always gloriously occupied with public life and whom nobody dared to love. And they all lived happily ever afterwards.

Frauds on the Fairies once permitted, we see little reason why they may not come to this, and great reason why they may. The Vicar of Wakefield was wisest when he was tired of being always wise. The world is too much with us, early and late. Leave this precious old escape from it, alone.

FROM CHARLES DICKENS, *HARD TIMES*, 1854
SERIALIZED IN WEEKLY INSTALLMENTS FROM APRIL 1854-AUGUST 1854

BOOK THE FIRST: SOWING

CHAPTER 1: THE ONE THING NEEDFUL

'Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!'

The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a school-room, and the speaker's square forefinger emphasized his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellarage in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard set. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's voice, which was inflexible, dry, and dictatorial. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's hair, which bristled on the skirts of his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface, all covered with knobs, like the crust of a plum pie, as if the head had scarcely warehouse-room for the hard facts stored inside. The speaker's obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square shoulders,—nay, his very neckcloth, trained to take him by the throat with an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, as it was,—all helped the emphasis.

'In this life, we want nothing but Facts, sir; nothing but Facts!'

The speaker, and the schoolmaster, and the third grown person present, all backed a little, and swept with their eyes the inclined plane of little vessels then and there arranged in order, ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim.

CHAPTER II: MURDERING THE INNOCENTS

Thomas Gradgrind, sir. A man of realities. A man of facts and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over. Thomas Gradgrind, sir—peremptorily Thomas—Thomas Gradgrind. With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket, sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to. It is a mere question of figures, a case of simple arithmetic. You might hope to get some other nonsensical belief into the head of George Gradgrind, or Augustus Gradgrind, or John Gradgrind, or Joseph Gradgrind (all supposititious, non-existent persons), but into the head of Thomas Gradgrind—no, sir!

In such terms Mr. Gradgrind always mentally introduced himself, whether to his private circle of acquaintance, or to the public in general. In such terms, no doubt, substituting the words 'boys and girls,' for 'sir,' Thomas Gradgrind now presented Thomas Gradgrind to the little pitchers before him, who were to be filled so full of facts.

Indeed, as he eagerly sparkled at them from the cellarage before mentioned, he seemed a kind of cannon loaded to the muzzle with facts, and prepared to blow them clean out of the regions of childhood at one discharge. He seemed a galvanizing apparatus, too, charged with a grim mechanical substitute for the tender young imaginations that were to be stormed away.

'Girl number twenty,' said Mr. Gradgrind, squarely pointing with his square forefinger, 'I don't know that girl. Who is that girl?'

'Sissy Jupe, sir,' explained number twenty, blushing, standing up, and curtseying.

'Sissy is not a name,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'Don't call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilia.'

'It's father as calls me Sissy, sir,' returned the young girl in a trembling voice, and with another curtsey.

'Then he has no business to do it,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'Tell him he mustn't. Cecilia Jupe. Let me see. What is your father?'

'He belongs to the horse-riding, if you please, sir.'

Mr. Gradgrind frowned, and waved off the objectionable calling with his hand.

'We don't want to know anything about that, here. You mustn't tell us about that, here. Your father breaks horses, don't he?'

'If you please, sir, when they can get any to break, they do break horses in the ring, sir.'

'You mustn't tell us about the ring, here. Very well, then. Describe your father as a horsebreaker. He doctors sick horses, I dare say?'

'Oh yes, sir.'

'Very well, then. He is a veterinary surgeon, a farrier, and horsebreaker. Give me your definition of a horse.'

(Sissy Jupe thrown into the greatest alarm by this demand.)

'Girl number twenty unable to define a horse!' said Mr. Gradgrind, for the general behoof of all the little pitchers. 'Girl number twenty possessed of no facts, in reference to one of the commonest of animals! Some boy's definition of a horse. Bitzer, yours.'

The square finger, moving here and there, lighted suddenly on Bitzer, perhaps because he chanced to sit in the same ray of sunlight which, darting in at one of the bare windows of the intensely whitewashed room, irradiated Sissy. For, the boys and girls sat on the face of the inclined plane in two compact bodies, divided up the centre by a narrow interval; and Sissy, being at the corner of a row on the sunny side, came in for the beginning of a sunbeam, of which Bitzer, being at the corner of a row on the other side, a few rows in advance, caught the end. But, whereas the girl was so dark-eyed and dark-haired, that she seemed to receive a deeper and more lustrous colour from the sun, when it shone upon her, the boy was so light-eyed and light-haired that the self-same rays appeared to draw out of him what little colour he ever possessed. His cold eyes would hardly have been eyes, but for the short ends of lashes which, by bringing them into immediate contrast with something paler than themselves, expressed their form. His short-cropped hair might have been a mere continuation of the sandy freckles on his forehead and face. His skin was so unwholesomely deficient in the natural tinge, that he looked as though, if he were cut, he would bleed white.

'Bitzer,' said Thomas Gradgrind. 'Your definition of a horse.'

'Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth.' Thus (and much more) Bitzer.

'Now girl number twenty,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'You know what a horse is.'

She curtseyed again, and would have blushed deeper, if she could have blushed deeper than she had blushed all this time. Bitzer, after rapidly blinking at Thomas Gradgrind with both eyes at once, and so catching the light upon his quivering ends of lashes that they looked like the antennæ of busy insects, put his knuckles to his freckled forehead, and sat down again.

The third gentleman now stepped forth. A mighty man at cutting and drying, he was; a government officer; in his way (and in most other people's too), a professed pugilist; always in training, always with a system to force down the general throat like a bolus, always to be heard of at the bar of his little Public-office, ready to fight all England. To continue in fistic phraseology, he had a genius for coming up to the scratch, wherever and whatever it was, and proving himself an ugly customer. He would go in and damage any subject whatever with his right, follow up with his left, stop, exchange, counter, bore his opponent (he always fought All England) to the ropes, and fall upon him neatly. He was certain to knock the wind out of common sense, and render that unlucky adversary deaf to the call of time. And he had it in charge from high authority to bring about the great public-office Millennium, when Commissioners should reign upon earth.

'Very well,' said this gentleman, briskly smiling, and folding his arms. 'That's a horse. Now, let me ask you girls and boys, 'Would you paper a room with representations of horses?'

After a pause, one half of the children cried in chorus, 'Yes, sir!' Upon which the other half, seeing in the gentleman's face that Yes was wrong, cried out in chorus, 'No, sir!'—as the custom is, in these examinations.

'Of course, No. Why wouldn't you?'

A pause. One corpulent slow boy, with a wheezy manner of breathing, ventured the answer, 'Because he wouldn't paper a room at all, but would paint it.'

'You *must* paper it,' said the gentleman, rather warmly.

'You must paper it,' said Thomas Gradgrind, 'whether you like it or not. Don't tell us you wouldn't paper it. What do you mean, boy?'

'I'll explain to you, then,' said the gentleman, after another and a dismal pause, 'why you wouldn't paper a room with representations of horses. Do you ever see horses walking up and down the sides of rooms in reality—in fact? Do you?'

'Yes, sir!' from one half. 'No, sir!' from the other.

'Of course no,' said the gentleman, with an indignant look at the wrong half. 'Why, then, you are not to see anywhere, what you don't see in fact; you are not to have anywhere, what you don't have in fact. What is called Taste, is only another name for Fact.' Thomas Gradgrind nodded his approbation.

'This is a new principle, a discovery, a great discovery,' said the gentleman. 'Now, I'll try you again. Suppose you were going to carpet a room. Would you use a carpet having a representation of flowers upon it?'

There being a general conviction by this time that 'No, sir!' was always the right answer to this gentleman, the chorus of No was very strong. Only a few feeble stragglers said Yes: among them Sissy Jupe.

'Girl number twenty,' said the gentleman, smiling in the calm strength of knowledge.

Sissy blushed, and stood up.

'So you would carpet your room—or your husband's room, if you were a grown woman, and had a husband—with representations of flowers, would you?' said the gentleman. 'Why would you?'

'If you please, sir, I am very fond of flowers,' returned the girl.

'And is that why you would put tables and chairs upon them, and have people walking over them with heavy boots?'

'It wouldn't hurt them, sir. They wouldn't crush and wither, if you please, sir. They would be the pictures of what was very pretty and pleasant, and I would fancy—'

'Ay, ay, ay! But you mustn't fancy,' cried the gentleman, quite elated by coming so happily to his point. 'That's it! You are never to fancy.'

'You are not, Cecilia Jupe,' Thomas Gradgrind solemnly repeated, 'to do anything of that kind.'

'Fact, fact, fact!' said the gentleman. And 'Fact, fact, fact!' repeated Thomas Gradgrind.

'You are to be in all things regulated and governed,' said the gentleman, 'by fact. We hope to have, before long, a board of fact, composed of commissioners of fact, who will force the people to be a people of fact, and of nothing but fact. You must discard the word Fancy altogether. You have nothing to do with it. You are not to have, in any object of use or ornament, what would be a contradiction in fact. You don't walk upon flowers in fact; you cannot be allowed to walk upon flowers in carpets. You don't find that foreign birds and butterflies come and perch upon your crockery; you cannot be permitted to paint foreign birds and butterflies upon your crockery. You never meet with quadrupeds going up and down walls; you must not have quadrupeds represented upon walls. You must use,' said the gentleman, 'for all these purposes, combinations and modifications (in primary colours) of mathematical figures which are susceptible of proof and demonstration. This is the new discovery. This is fact. This is taste.'

The girl curtseyed, and sat down. She was very young, and she looked as if she were frightened by the matter-of-fact prospect the world afforded.

'Now, if Mr. M'Choakumchild,' said the gentleman, 'will proceed to give his first lesson here, Mr. Gradgrind, I shall be happy, at your request, to observe his mode of procedure.'. . .

FROM CHARLES DICKENS, *LITTLE DORRIT*, 1857

SERIALIZED IN MONTHLY NUMBER BETWEEN DECEMBER 1855-JUNE 1857

From CHAPTER 24. Fortune-Telling

. . . Her great staring child tenderly embraced her; and having smoothed her hair, and bathed her forehead and eyes with cold water (offices in which her awkward hands became skilful), hugged her again, exulted in her brighter looks, and stationed her in her chair by the window. Over against this chair, Maggy, with apoplectic exertions that were not at all required, dragged the box which was her seat on story-telling occasions, sat down upon it, hugged her own knees, and said, with a voracious appetite for stories, and with widely-opened eyes:

'Now, Little Mother, let's have a good 'un!'

'What shall it be about, Maggy?'

'Oh, let's have a princess,' said Maggy, 'and let her be a reg'lar one. Beyond all belief, you know!'

Little Dorrit considered for a moment; and with a rather sad smile upon her face, which was flushed by the sunset, began:

'Maggy, there was once upon a time a fine King, and he had everything he could wish for, and a great deal more. He had gold and silver, diamonds and rubies, riches of every kind. He had palaces, and he had—'

'Hospitals,' interposed Maggy, still nursing her knees. 'Let him have hospitals, because they're so comfortable. Hospitals with lots of Chicking.'

'Yes, he had plenty of them, and he had plenty of everything.'

'Plenty of baked potatoes, for instance?' said Maggy.

'Plenty of everything.'

'Lor!' chuckled Maggy, giving her knees a hug. 'Wasn't it prime!'

'This King had a daughter, who was the wisest and most beautiful Princess that ever was seen. When she was a child she understood all her lessons before her masters taught them to her; and when she was grown up, she was the wonder of the world. Now, near the Palace where this Princess lived, there was a cottage in which there was a poor little tiny woman, who lived all alone by herself.'

'An old woman,' said Maggy, with an unctuous smack of her lips.

'No, not an old woman. Quite a young one.'

'I wonder she warn't afraid,' said Maggy. 'Go on, please.'

'The Princess passed the cottage nearly every day, and whenever she went by in her beautiful carriage, she saw the poor tiny woman spinning at her wheel, and she looked at the tiny woman, and the tiny woman looked at her. So, one day she stopped the coachman a little way from the cottage, and got out and walked on and peeped in at the door, and there, as usual, was the tiny woman spinning at her wheel, and she looked at the Princess, and the Princess looked at her.'

'Like trying to stare one another out,' said Maggy. 'Please go on, Little Mother.'

'The Princess was such a wonderful Princess that she had the power of knowing secrets, and she said to the tiny woman, Why do you keep it there? This showed her directly that the Princess knew why she lived all alone by herself spinning at her wheel, and she kneeled down at the Princess's feet, and asked her never to betray her. So the Princess said, I never will betray you. Let me see it. So the tiny woman closed the shutter of the cottage window and fastened the door, and trembling from head to foot for fear that any one should suspect her, opened a very secret place and showed the Princess a shadow.'

'Lor!' said Maggy.

'It was the shadow of Some one who had gone by long before: of Some one who had gone on far away quite out of reach, never, never to come back. It was bright to look at; and when the tiny woman showed it to the Princess, she was proud of it with all her heart, as a great, great treasure. When the Princess had considered it a little while, she said to the tiny woman, And you keep watch over this every day? And she cast down her eyes, and whispered, Yes. Then the Princess said, Remind me why. To which the other replied, that no one so good and kind had ever passed that way, and that was why in the beginning. She said, too, that nobody missed it, that nobody was the worse for it, that Some one had gone on, to those who were expecting him—'

'Some one was a man then?' interposed Maggy.

Little Dorrit timidly said Yes, she believed so; and resumed:

'—Had gone on to those who were expecting him, and that this remembrance was stolen or kept back from nobody. The Princess made answer, Ah! But when the cottager died it would be discovered there. The tiny woman told her No; when that time came, it would sink quietly into her own grave, and would never be found.'

'Well, to be sure!' said Maggy. 'Go on, please.'

'The Princess was very much astonished to hear this, as you may suppose, Maggy.'

('And well she might be,' said Maggy.)

'So she resolved to watch the tiny woman, and see what came of it. Every day she drove in her beautiful carriage by the cottage-door, and there she saw the tiny woman always alone by herself spinning at her wheel, and she looked at the tiny woman, and the tiny woman looked at her. At last one day the wheel was still, and the tiny woman was not to be seen. When the Princess made inquiries why the wheel had stopped, and where the tiny woman was, she was informed that the wheel had stopped because there was nobody to turn it, the tiny woman being dead.'

('They ought to have took her to the Hospital,' said Maggy, 'and then she'd have got over it.')

'The Princess, after crying a very little for the loss of the tiny woman, dried her eyes and got out of her carriage at the place where she had stopped it before, and went to the cottage and peeped in at the door. There was nobody to look at her now, and nobody for her to look at, so she went in at once to search for the treasured shadow. But there was no sign of it to be found anywhere; and then she knew that the tiny woman had told her the truth, and that it would never give anybody any trouble, and that it had sunk quietly into her own grave, and that she and it were at rest together.

'That's all, Maggy.'

The sunset flush was so bright on Little Dorrit's face when she came thus to the end of her story, that she interposed her hand to shade it.

'Had she got to be old?' Maggy asked.

'The tiny woman?'

'Ah!'

'I don't know,' said Little Dorrit. 'But it would have been just the same if she had been ever so old.'

'Would it raly!' said Maggy. 'Well, I suppose it would though.' And sat staring and ruminating.

She sat so long with her eyes wide open, that at length Little Dorrit, to entice her from her box, rose and looked out of window. As she glanced down into the yard, she saw Pancks come in and leer up with the corner of his eye as he went by.

'Who's he, Little Mother?' said Maggy. She had joined her at the window and was leaning on her shoulder. 'I see him come in and out often.'

'I have heard him called a fortune-teller,' said Little Dorrit. 'But I doubt if he could tell many people even their past or present fortunes.'

'Couldn't have told the Princess hers?' said Maggy.

Little Dorrit, looking musingly down into the dark valley of the prison, shook her head.

'Nor the tiny woman hers?' said Maggy.

'No,' said Little Dorrit, with the sunset very bright upon her. 'But let us come away from the window.' . . .

FROM GEORGE HENRY LEWES,
"REALISM IN ART: RECENT GERMAN FICTION,"
WESTMINSTER REVIEW, CXXXVIII, OCTOBER 1858, PAGES 271-287

Erasmus relates a curious case of mania which afflicted a young Italian gentleman, who, although he had never been in Germany, nor had ever learned German, was suddenly and incomprehensibly seized with an irresistible tendency to utter copious and incoherent phrases, distinctly recognizable as German. A celebrated physician was called in. The diagnosis left no doubt that the young gentleman was suffering from worms. A cure was effected; but with the departure of the entozoa there was a complete and final extinction of the German idiom. From that moment the young gentleman had easier intestines, and spoke nothing but harmonious Italian.

Without guaranteeing the physiological accuracy of this anecdote, which is cited by Erasmus somewhere in his oration in praise of medicine, we confess that we should not be reluctant to see a similar method of cure applied to many of the German literati, as, at any rate, a tentative effort to restrain the too abundant copiousness of weak and watery idiom which flows from that body. If we are to take the diagnosis of the Leipsic Fair, we must pronounce entozoa to be epidemically rife. How otherwise can the phenomena be explained? How is it that with a language rich, flexible, potent for every purpose, and with writers who, as masters of composition, take rank beside the greatest names in literature, the majority of Germans, nevertheless, contrive to render their noble language the most wearisome, the most cumbrous, the least intelligible and least expressive medium for the accurate and delicate communication of ideas and sentiment? How is it that, with such models, they have not learned the art of writing?

To be gentlemen of somewhat slow, sluggish minds is perhaps their misfortune; but to be writers deplorably deficient in the first principles of composition is assuredly their fault. Some men pasture on platitudes, as oxen upon meadow-grass; they are at home on a dead level of commonplace, and do not desire it to be irradiated by a felicity of expression. But if they cannot be felicitous, they should at any rate be clear; if their phrases are only approximative, their sentences need not be half a page in length, clause within clause, and encumbered with auxiliaries. To write well is an art, and an art possessed by few; but to write decently, and with care, is an accomplishment which can be learned by all, although it is one not yet mastered by the writers to whom we allude. This is a defect over which foreigners marvel, and cultivated Germans mourn. Where lies the cause of that defect? It cannot lie in the language, since in poetry all Germans express themselves clearly, if not always felicitously; and in the prose of the good writers—of which there are many—we see how capable the language is of crystal clearness, stately largo, delicate expression, or sharp, rapid epigram. Can the cause he the entozoa? . . .

This notion of the function of Art is widely spread. It has its advocates in all countries, for it is the natural refuge of in competence, to which men fly, impelled by the secret sense of their inability to portray Reality so as to make it interesting. A distinction is drawn between Art and Reality, and an antithesis established between Realism and Idealism which would never have gained acceptance had not men in general lost sight of the fact that Art is a Representation of Reality—a Representation which, inasmuch as it is not the thing itself, but only represents it, must necessarily be limited by the nature of its medium; the canvass of the painter, the marble of the sculptor, the chords of the musician, and the language of the writer, each bring with them peculiar laws; but while thus limited, while thus regulated by the necessities imposed on it by each medium of expression, Art always aims at the representation of Reality, i. e. of Truth; and no departure from truth is permissible, except such as inevitably lies in the nature of the medium itself. Realism is thus the basis of all Art, and its antithesis is not Idealism, but *Falsism*. When our painters represent peasants with regular features and irreproachable linen; when their milk maids have the air of Keepsake beauties, whose costume is picturesque, and never old or dirty; when Hodge is made to speak refined sentiments in unexceptionable English, and children utter long speeches of religious and poetic enthusiasm; when the conversation of the parlour and drawing room is a succession of philosophical remarks, expressed with great clearness and logic, an attempt is made to idealize, but the result is simple falsification and bad art. To misrepresent the forms of ordinary life is no less an offence than to misrepresent the forms of ideal life; a pug-nosed Apollo, or Jupiter in a great-coat, would not be more truly shocking to an artistic mind, than are those senseless falsifications of nature into which incompetence is led, under the pretence of idealizing, of "beautifying" nature. Either give us true peasants, or leave them untouched; either paint no drapery at all, or paint it with the utmost fidelity; either keep your people silent, or make them speak the idiom of their class. . . .

In like manner the novelist (to return to the point from which we started) expresses his mind in his novels, and accordinng [sic] as his emotional sympathy is keen and active, according to his poetic disposition, will the choice and treatment of his subject be poetical: but it must always be real—true. If he select the incidents and characters of ordinary life, he must be rigidly bound down to accuracy in the presentation. He is at liberty to avoid such subjects, if he thinks them prosaic and uninteresting (which will mean that he does not feel their poetry and interest) but having chosen, he is not at liberty to falsify, under pretence of beautifying them; every departure from truth in motive, idiom, or probability, is, to that extent, a defect. His dressmaker must be a young woman who makes dresses, and not a sentimental "heroine," evangelical and consumptive; she may be consumptive, she may also be evangelical, for dressmakers are so some times, but she must be individually a dressmaker. So also the merchant must have an air of the counting-house, an ostler must smell of the stables. To *call* a man merchant, and tell us of his counting-house, while for anything else we might suppose him to be a nobleman, or an uncle from India, is not Art, because it is not representation of reality. If the writer's knowledge or sympathies do not lead him in the direction of ordinary life, if he can neither paint town nor country, let him take to the wide fields of History or Fancy. Even there the demands of truth will pursue him; he must paint what he distinctly sees with his imagination; if he succeed, he will create characters which are true although ideal; and in this sense Puck, Ariel, Brutus, and Falstaff, are as real as Dick Swiveller, or Tom Jones. . . .

Thus our experience of German fictions completely bears out the critical principles which assign the first place to Realism in Art; only those works which are distinguished by any felicity of realism in their treatment are capable of conveying any durable pleasure to the cultivated reader, and this in exact proportion to the truthfulness of the treatment. If German novels are, for the most part, dreary inflictions, it is because they have so little realism that they resemble nothing on earth or under it.

FROM GEORGE MACDONALD, "THE IMAGINATION: ITS FUNCTIONS AND ITS CULTURE," 1867

Two selections in this appendix come from MacDonald himself. Both essays were eventually published in A Dish of Orts *(1893). The imagination was a central issue for the Romantics, particularly in England, and MacDonald's essays frame the imagination in two ways: that of the creative imagination that reflects God's divine imagination, and that of the fantastic imagination that is a specialized form of this creative activity.*

There are in whose notion education would seem to consist in the production of a certain repose through the development of this and that faculty, and the depression, if not eradication, of this and that other faculty. But if mere repose were the end in view, an unsparing depression of all the faculties would be the surest means of approaching it, provided always the animal instincts could be depressed likewise, or, better still, kept in a state of constant repletion. Happily, however, for the human race, it possesses in the passion of hunger even, a more immediate saviour than in the wisest selection and treatment of its faculties. For repose is not the end of education; its end is a noble unrest, an ever renewed awaking from the dead, a ceaseless questioning of the past for the interpretation of the future, an urging on of the motions of life, which had better far be accelerated into fever, than retarded into lethargy.

By those who consider a balanced repose the end of culture, the imagination must necessarily be regarded as the one faculty before all others to be suppressed. "Are there not facts?" say they. "Why forsake them for fancies? Is there not that which, may be *known*? Why forsake it for inventions? What God hath made, into that let man inquire."

We answer: To inquire into what God has made is the main function of the imagination. It is aroused by facts, is nourished by facts; seeks for higher and yet higher laws in those facts; but refuses to regard science as the sole interpreter of nature, or the laws of science as the only region of discovery.

We must begin with a definition of the word *imagination*, or rather some description of the faculty to which we give the name.

The word itself means an *imaging* or a making of likenesses. The imagination is that faculty which gives form to thought—not necessarily uttered form, but form capable of being uttered in shape or in sound, or in any mode upon which the senses can lay hold. It is, therefore, that faculty in man which is likest to the prime operation of the power of God, and has, therefore, been called the *creative* faculty, and its exercise *creation. Poet* means *maker.* We must not forget, however, that between creator and poet lies the one unpassable gulf which distinguishes—far be it from us to say *divides*—all that is God's from all that is man's; a gulf teeming with infinite revelations, but a gulf over which no man can pass to find out God, although God needs not to pass over it to find man; the gulf between that which calls, and that which is thus called into being; between that which makes in its own image and that which is made in that image. It is better to keep the word *creation* for that calling out of nothing which is the imagination of God; except it be as an occasional symbolic expression, whose daring is fully recognized, of the likeness of man's work to the work of his maker. The necessary unlikeness between the creator and the created holds within it the equally necessary likeness of the thing made to him who makes it, and so of the work of the made to the work of the maker. When therefore, refusing to employ the word *creation* of the work of man, we yet use the word *imagination* of the work of God, we cannot be said to dare at all. It is only to give the name of man's faculty to that power after which and by which it was fashioned. The imagination of man is made in the image of the imagination of God. Everything of man must have been of God first; and it will help much towards our understanding of the imagination and its functions in man if we first succeed in regarding aright the imagination of God, in which the imagination of man lives and moves and has its being.

As to *what* thought is in the mind of God ere it takes form, or what the form is to him ere he utters it; in a word, what the consciousness of God is in either case, all we can say is, that our consciousness in the resembling conditions must, afar off, resemble his. But when we come to consider the acts embodying the Divine thought (if indeed thought and act be not with him one and the same), then we enter a region of large difference. We discover at once, for instance, that where a man would make a machine, or a picture, or a book, God makes the man that makes the book, or the picture, or the machine. Would God give us a drama? He makes a Shakespere. Or would he construct a drama more immediately his own? He begins with the building of the stage itself, and that stage is a world—a universe of worlds. He makes the actors, and they do not act,—they *are* their part. He utters them into the visible to work out their life—his drama. When he would have an epic, he sends a thinking hero into his drama, and the epic is the soliloquy of his Hamlet. Instead of writing his lyrics, he sets his birds and his maidens a-singing. All the processes of the ages are God's science; all the flow of history is his poetry. His sculpture is not in marble, but in living and speech-giving forms, which pass away, not to yield place to those that come after, but to be perfected in a nobler studio. What he has done remains, although it vanishes; and he never either forgets what he has once done, or does it even once again. As the thoughts move in the mind of a man, so move the worlds of men and women in the mind of God, and make no confusion there, for there they had their birth, the offspring of his imagination. Man is but a thought of God.

If we now consider the so-called creative faculty in man, we shall find that in no *primary* sense is this faculty creative. Indeed, a man is rather *being thought* than *thinking*, when a new thought arises in his mind. He knew it not till he found it there, therefore he could not even have sent for it. He did not create it, else how could it be the surprise that it was when it arose? He may, indeed, in rare instances foresee that something is coming, and make ready the place for its birth; but that is the utmost relation of consciousness and will he can bear to the dawning idea. Leaving this aside, however, and turning to the *embodiment* or revelation of thought, we shall find that a man no more *creates* the forms by which he would reveal his thoughts, than he creates those thoughts themselves. . . .

But although the human imagination has no choice but to make use of the forms already prepared for it, its operation is the same as that of the divine inasmuch as it does put thought into form. And if it be to man what creation is to God, we must expect to find it operative in every sphere of human activity. Such is, indeed, the fact, and that to a far greater extent than is commonly supposed. . . .

All words, then, belonging to the inner world of the mind, are of the imagination, are originally poetic words. The better, however, any such word is fitted for the needs of humanity, the sooner it loses its poetic aspect by commonness of use. It ceases to be heard as a symbol, and appears only as a sign. Thus thousands of words which were originally poetic words owing their existence to the imagination, lose their vitality, and harden into mummies of prose. Not merely in literature does poetry come first, and prose afterwards, but poetry is the source of all the language that belongs to the inner world, whether it be of passion or of metaphysics, of psychology or of aspiration. No poetry comes by the elevation of prose; but the half of prose comes by the "massing into the common clay" of thousands of winged words, whence, like the lovely shells of by-gone ages, one is occasionally disinterred by some lover of speech, and held up to the light to show the play of colour in its manifold laminations.

For the world is—allow us the homely figure—the human being turned inside out. All that moves in the mind is symbolized in Nature. Or, to use another more philosophical, and certainly not less poetic figure, the world is a sensuous analysis of humanity, and hence an inexhaustible wardrobe for the clothing of human thought. Take any word expressive of emotion—take the word *emotion* itself—and you will find that its primary meaning is of the outer world. In the swaying of the woods, in the unrest of the "wavy plain," the imagination saw the picture of a well-known condition of the human mind; and hence the word *emotion*. . . .

But while the imagination of man has thus the divine function of putting thought into form, it has a duty altogether human, which is paramount to that function—the duty, namely, which springs from his immediate relation to the Father, that of following and finding out the divine imagination in whose image it was made. To do this, the man must watch its signs, its manifestations. He must contemplate what the Hebrew poets call the works of His hands. . . .

"But how can the imagination have anything to do with science? That region, at least, is governed by fixed laws."

"True," we answer. "But how much do we know of these laws? How much of science already belongs to the region of the ascertained—in other words, has been conquered by the intellect? We will not now dispute, your vindication of the *ascertained* from the intrusion of the imagination; but we do claim for it all the undiscovered, all the unexplored." "Ah, well! There it can do little harm. There let it run riot if you will." "No," we reply. "Licence is not what we claim when we assert the duty of the imagination to be that of following and finding out the work that God maketh. Her part is to understand God ere she attempts to utter man. Where is the room for being fanciful or riotous here? It is only the ill-bred, that is, the uncultivated imagination that will amuse itself where it ought to worship and work."

"But the facts of Nature are to be discovered only by observation and experiment." True. But how does the man of science come to think of his experiments? Does observation reach to the non-present, the possible, the yet unconceived? Even if it showed you the experiments which *ought* to be made, will observation reveal to you the experiments which *might* be made? And who can tell of which kind is the one that carries in its bosom the secret of the law you seek? We yield you your facts. The laws we claim for the prophetic imagination. "He hath set the world *in* man's heart," not in his understanding. And the heart must open the door to the understanding. It is the far-seeing imagination which beholds what might be a form of things, and says to the intellect: "Try whether that may not be the form of these things;" which beholds or invents *a* harmonious relation of parts and operations, and sends the intellect to find out whether that be not *the* harmonious relation of them—that is, the law of the phenomenon it contemplates. Nay, the poetic relations themselves in the phenomenon may suggest to the imagination the law that rules its scientific life. Yea, more than this: we dare to claim for the true, childlike, humble imagination, such an inward oneness with the laws of the universe that it possesses in itself an insight into the very nature of things.

Lord Bacon tells us that a prudent question is the half of knowledge. Whence comes this prudent question? we repeat. And we answer, From the imagination. It is the imagination that suggests in what direction to make the new inquiry—which, should it cast no immediate light on the answer sought, can yet hardly fail to be a step towards final discovery. Every experiment has its origin in hypothesis; without the scaffolding of hypothesis, the house of science could never arise. And the construction of any hypothesis whatever is the work of the imagination. The man who cannot invent will never discover. The imagination often gets a glimpse of the law itself long before it is or can be *ascertained* to be a law. . . .

The region belonging to the pure intellect is straitened: the imagination labours to extend its territories, to give it room. She sweeps across the borders, searching out new lands into which she may guide her plodding brother. The imagination is the light which redeems from the darkness for the eyes of the understanding. Novalis says, "The imagination is the stuff of the intellect"—affords, that is, the material upon which the intellect works. And Bacon, in his "Advancement of Learning," fully recognizes this its office, corresponding to the foresight of God in this, that it beholds afar off. And he says: "Imagination is much akin to miracle-working faith." . . .

In the scientific region of her duty of which we speak, the Imagination cannot have her perfect work; this belongs to another and higher sphere than that of intellectual truth—that, namely, of full-globed humanity, operating in which she gives birth to poetry—truth in beauty. But her function in the complete sphere of our nature, will, at the same time, influence her more limited operation in the sections that belong to science. Coleridge says that no one but a poet will make any further *great* discoveries in mathematics; and Bacon says that "wonder," that faculty of the mind especially attendant on the child-like imagination, "is the seed of knowledge." The influence of the poetic upon the scientific imagination is, for instance, especially present in the construction of an invisible whole from the hints afforded by a visible part; where the needs of the part, its uselessness, its broken relations, are the only guides to a multiplex harmony, completeness, and end, which is the whole. From a little bone, worn with ages of death, older than the man can think, his scientific imagination dashed with the poetic, calls up the form, size, habits, periods, belonging to an animal never beheld by human eyes, even to the mingling contrasts of scales and wings, of feathers and hair. Through the combined lenses of science and imagination, we look back into ancient times, so dreadful in their incompleteness, that it may well have been the task of seraphic faith, as well as of cherubic imagination, to behold in the wallowing monstrosities of the terror-teeming earth, the prospective, quiet, age-long labour of God preparing the world with all its humble, graceful service for his unborn Man. The imagination of the poet, on the other hand, dashed with the imagination of the man of science, revealed to Goethe the prophecy of the flower in the leaf. No other than an artistic imagination, however, fulfilled of science, could have attained to the discovery of the fact that the leaf is the imperfect flower. . . .

We have already said that the forms of Nature (by which word *forms* we mean any of those conditions of Nature which affect the senses of man) are so many approximate representations of the mental conditions of humanity. The outward, commonly called the material, is *informed* by, or has form in virtue of, the inward or immaterial—in a word, the thought. The forms of Nature are the representations of human thought in virtue of their being the embodiment of God's thought. As such, therefore, they can be read and used to any depth, shallow or profound. Men of all ages and all developments have discovered in them the means of expression; and the men of ages to come, before us in every path along which we are now striving, must likewise find such means in those forms, unfolding with their unfolding necessities. The man, then, who, in harmony with nature, attempts the discovery of more of her meanings, is just searching out the things of God. The deepest of these are far too simple for us to understand as yet. But let our imagination interpretive reveal to us one severed significance of one of her parts, and such is the harmony of the whole, that all the realm of Nature is open to us henceforth—not without labour—and in time. . . .

But is there nothing to be said of the function of the imagination from the Greek side of the question? Does it possess no creative faculty? Has it no originating power?

Certainly it would be a poor description of the Imagination which omitted the one element especially present to the mind that invented the word *Poet*.—It can present us with new thought-forms—new, that is, as revelations of thought. It has created none of the material that goes to make these forms. Nor does it work upon raw material. But it takes forms already existing, and gathers them about a thought so much higher than they, that it can group and subordinate and harmonize them into a whole which shall represent, unveil that thought. . . .

This operation of the imagination in choosing, gathering, and vitally combining the material of a new revelation, may be well illustrated from a certain employment of the poetic faculty in which our greatest poets have delighted. Perceiving truth half hidden and half revealed in the slow speech and stammering tongue of men who have gone before them, they have taken up the unfinished form and completed it; they have, as it were, rescued the soul of meaning from its prison of uninformed crudity, where it sat like the Prince in the "Arabian Nights," half man, half marble; they have set it free in its own form, in a shape, namely, which it could "through every part impress." Shakespere's keen eye suggested many such a rescue from the tomb—of a tale drearily told—a tale which no one now would read save for the glorified form in which he has re-embodied its true contents. And from Tennyson we can produce one specimen small enough for our use, which, a mere chip from the great marble re-embodying the old legend of Arthur's death, may, like the hand of Achilles holding his spear in the crowded picture,

"Stand for the whole to be imagined."

In the "History of Prince Arthur," when Sir Bedivere returns after hiding Excalibur the first time, the king asks him what he has seen, and he answers—

"Sir, I saw nothing but waves and wind."

The second time, to the same question, he answers—

> "Sir, I saw nothing but the water wap, and the
> waves wan." . . .

This answer Tennyson has expanded into the well-known lines—

> "I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
> And the wild water lapping on the crag;"

slightly varied, for the other occasion, into—

> "I heard the water lapping on the crag,
> And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

But, as to this matter of *creation*, is there, after all, I ask yet, any genuine sense in which a man may be said to create his own thought-forms? Allowing that a new combination of forms already existing might be called creation, is the man, after all, the author of this new combination? Did he, with his will and his knowledge, proceed wittingly, consciously, to construct a form which should embody his thought? Or did this form arise within him without will or effort of his—vivid if not clear—certain if not outlined? Ruskin (and better authority we do not know) will assert the latter, and we think he is right: though perhaps he would insist more upon the absolute perfection of the vision than we are quite prepared to do. Such embodiments are not the result of the man's intention, or of the operation of his conscious nature. His feeling is that they are given to him; that from the vast unknown, where time and space are not, they suddenly appear in luminous writing upon the wall of his consciousness. Can it be correct, then, to say that he created them? Nothing less so, as it seems to us. But can we not say that they are the creation of the unconscious portion of his nature? Yes, provided we can understand that that which is the individual, the man, can know, and not know that it knows, can create and yet be ignorant that virtue has gone out of it. From that unknown region we grant they come, but not by its own blind working. Nor, even were it so, could any amount of such production, where no will was concerned, be dignified with the name of creation. But God sits in that chamber of our being in which the candle of our consciousness goes out in darkness, and sends forth from thence wonderful gifts into the light of that understanding which is His candle. Our hope lies in no most perfect mechanism even of the spirit, but in the wisdom wherein we live and move and have our being. Thence we hope for endless forms of beauty informed of truth. If the dark portion of our own being were the origin of our imaginations, we might well fear the apparition of such monsters as would be generated in the sickness of a decay which could never feel—only declare—a slow return towards primeval chaos. But the Maker is our Light. . . .

For the end of imagination is *harmony*. A right imagination, being the reflex of the creation, will fall in with the divine order of things as the highest form of its own operation; "will tune its instrument here at the door" to the divine harmonies within; will be content alone with growth towards the divine idea, which includes all that is beautiful in the imperfect imaginations of men; will know that every deviation from that growth is downward; and will therefore send the man forth from its loftiest representations to do the commonest duty of the most wearisome calling in a hearty and hopeful spirit. This is the work of the right imagination; and towards this work every imagination, in proportion to the rightness that is in it, will tend. The reveries even of the wise man will make him stronger for his work; his dreaming as well as his thinking will render him sorry for past failure, and hopeful of future success.

To come now to the culture of the imagination. Its development is one of the main ends of the divine education of life with all its efforts and experiences. Therefore the first and essential means for its culture must be an ordering of our life towards harmony with its ideal in the mind of God. As he that is willing to do the will of the Father, shall know of the doctrine, so, we doubt not, he that will do the will of THE POET, shall behold the Beautiful. For all is God's; and the man who is growing into harmony with His will, is growing into harmony with himself; all the hidden glories of his being are coming out into the light of humble consciousness; so that at the last he shall be a pure microcosm, faithfully reflecting, after his manner, the mighty macrocosm. We believe, therefore, that nothing will do so much for the intellect or the imagination as *being good*—we do not mean after any formula or any creed, but simply after the faith of Him who did the will of his Father in heaven.

But if we speak of direct means for the culture of the imagination, the whole is comprised in two words—food and exercise. If you want strong arms, take animal food, and row. Feed your imagination with food convenient for it, and exercise it, not in the contortions of the acrobat, but in the movements of the gymnast. And first for the food.

Goethe has told us that the way to develop the aesthetic faculty is to have constantly before our eyes, that is, in the room we most frequent, some work of the best attainable art. This will teach us to refuse the evil and choose the good. It will plant itself in our minds and become our counsellor. Involuntarily, unconsciously, we shall compare with its perfection everything that comes before us for judgment. Now, although no better advice could he given, it involves one danger, that of narrowness. And not easily, in dread of this danger, would one change his tutor, and so procure variety of instruction. But in the culture of the imagination, books, although not the only, are the readiest means of supplying the food convenient for it, and a hundred books may he had where even one work of art of the right sort is unattainable, seeing such must he of some size as well as of thorough excellence. And in variety alone is safety from the danger of the convenient food becoming the inconvenient model.

Let us suppose, then, that one who himself justly estimates the imagination is anxious to develop its operation in his child. No doubt the best beginning, especially if the child be young, is an acquaintance with nature, in which let him he encouraged to observe vital phenomena, to put things together, to speculate from what he sees to what he does not see. But let earnest care be taken that upon no matter shall he go on talking foolishly. Let him be as fanciful as he may, but let him not, even in his fancy, sin against fancy's sense; for fancy has its laws as certainly as the most ordinary business of life. When he is silly, let him know it and be ashamed.

But where this association with nature is but occasionally possible, recourse must be had to literature. In books, we not only have store of all results of the imagination, but in them, as in her workshop, we may behold her embodying before our very eyes, in music of speech, in wonder of words, till her work, like a golden dish set with shining jewels, and adorned by the hands of the cunning workmen, stands finished before us. In this kind, then, the best must be set before the learner, that he may eat and not be satisfied; for the finest products of the imagination are of the best nourishment for the beginnings of that imagination. And the mind of the teacher must mediate between the work of art and the mind of the pupil, bringing them together in the vital contact of intelligence; directing the observation to the lines of expression, the points of force; and helping the mind to repose upon the whole, so that no separable beauties shall lead to a neglect of the scope—that is the shape or form complete. And ever he must seek to *show* excellence rather than talk about it, giving the thing itself, that it may grow into the mind, and not a eulogy of his own upon the thing; isolating the point worthy of remark rather than making many remarks upon the point.

Especially must he endeavour to show the spiritual scaffolding or skeleton of any work of art; those main ideas upon which the shape is constructed, and around which the rest group as ministering dependencies.

But he will not, therefore, pass over that intellectual structure without which the other could not be manifested. He will not forget the builder while he admires the architect. While he dwells with delight on the relation of the peculiar arch to the meaning of the whole cathedral, he will not think it needless to explain the principles on which it is constructed, or even how those principles are carried out in actual process. Neither yet will the tracery of its windows, the foliage of its crockets, or the fretting of its mouldings be forgotten. Every beauty will have its word, only all beauties will be subordinated to the final beauty—that is, the unity of the whole.

Thus doing, he shall perform the true office of friendship. He will introduce his pupil into the society which he himself prizes most, surrounding him with the genial presence of the high-minded, that this good company may work its own kind in him who frequents it.

But he will likewise seek to turn him aside from such company, whether of books or of men, as might tend to lower his reverence, his choice, or his standard. He will, therefore, discourage indiscriminate reading, and that worse than waste which consists in skimming the books of a circulating library. He knows that if a book is worth reading at all, it is worth reading well; and that, if it is not worth reading, it is only to the most accomplished reader that it *can* be worth skimming. He will seek to make him discern, not merely between the good and the evil, but between the good and the not so good. And this not for the sake of sharpening the intellect, still less of generating that self-satisfaction which is the closest attendant upon criticism, but for the sake of choosing the best path and the best companions upon it. A spirit of criticism for the sake of distinguishing only, or, far worse, for the sake of having one's opinion ready upon demand, is not merely repulsive to all true thinkers, but is, in itself, destructive of all thinking. A spirit of criticism for the sake of the truth—a spirit that does not start from its chamber at every noise, but waits till its presence is desired—cannot, indeed, garnish the house, but can sweep it clean. Were there enough of such wise criticism, there would be ten times the study of the best writers of the past, and perhaps one-tenth of the admiration for the ephemeral productions of the day. A gathered mountain of misplaced worships would be swept into the sea by the study of one good book; and while what was good in an inferior book would still be admired, the relative position of the book would be altered and its influence lessened. . . .

Such training is not solely fitted for the possible development of artistic faculty. Few, in this world, will ever be able to utter what they feel. Fewer still will be able to utter it in forms of their own. Nor is it necessary that there should be many such. But it is necessary that all should feel. It is necessary that all should understand and imagine the good; that all should begin, at least, to follow and find out God.

"The glory of God is to conceal a thing, but the glory of the king is to find it out," says Solomon. "As if," remarks Bacon on the passage, "according to the innocent play of children, the Divine Majesty took delight to hide his works, to the end to have them found out; and as if kings could not obtain a greater honour than to be God's playfellows in that game."

One more quotation from the book of Ecclesiastes, setting forth both the necessity we are under to imagine, and the comfort that our imagining cannot outstrip God's making.

"I have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. He hath made everything beautiful in his time; also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end."

Thus to be playfellows with God in this game, the little ones may gather their daisies and follow their painted moths; the child of the kingdom may pore upon the lilies of the field, and gather faith as the birds of the air their food from the leafless hawthorn, ruddy with the stores God has laid up for them; and the man of science

"May sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew;
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain."

GEORGE MACDONALD, DEDICATION TO DUNCAN MCCOLL, HUNTLY, MAY 1864

THE PORTENT: A STORY OF THE INNER VISION OF THE HIGHLANDERS, COMMONLY CALLED THE SECOND SIGHT

MY DEAR SIR, KENSINGTON, *May, 1864.*

Allow me, with the honour due to my father's friend, to inscribe this little volume with your name. The name of one friend is better than those of all the Muses.

And permit me to say a few words about the story.—It is a Romance. I am well aware that, with many readers, this epithet will be enough to ensure condemnation. But there ought to be a place for any story, which, although founded in the marvellous, is true to human nature and to itself. Truth to Humanity, and harmony within itself, are almost the sole unvarying essentials of a work of art. Even *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*—than which what more marvellous?—is true in these respects. And Shakespere himself will allow any amount of the marvellous, provided this truth is observed. I hope my story is thus true; and therefore, while it claims some place, undeserving of being classed with what are commonly called *sensational novels.*

I am well aware that such tales are not of much account, at present; and greatly would I regret that they should ever become the fashion; of which, however, there is no danger. But, seeing so much of our life must be spent in dreaming, may there not be a still nook, shadowy, but not miasmatic, in some lowly region of literature, where, in the pauses of labour, a man may sit down, and dream such a day-dream as I now offer to your acceptance, and that of those who will judge the work, in part at least, by its purely literary claims? If I confined my pen to such results, you, at least, would have a right to blame me. But you, for one, will, I am sure, justify an author in dreaming *sometimes.*

In offering you a story, however, founded on *The Second Sight*, the belief in which was common to our ancestors, I owe you, at the same time, an apology. For the tone and colour of the story are so different from those naturally belonging to a Celtic tale, that you might well be inclined to refuse my request, simply on the ground that your pure Highland blood revolted from the degenerate embodiment given to the ancient belief. I can only say that my early education was not Celtic enough to enable me to do better in this respect. I beg that you will accept the offering with forgiveness, if you cannot with approbation.

Yours affectionately,
GEORGE MACDONALD.

GEORGE MACDONALD,
"THE FANTASTIC IMAGINATION," *A DISH OF ORTS*, 1894

That we have in English no word corresponding to the German *Mährchen*, drives us to use the word *Fairytale*, regardless of the fact that the tale may have nothing to do with any sort of fairy. The old use of the word *Fairy*, by Spenser at least, might, however, well be adduced, were justification or excuse necessary where *need must*.

Were I asked, what is a fairytale? I should reply, *Read Undine: that is a fairytale; then read this and that as well, and you will see what is a fairytale.* Were I further begged to describe the *fairytale*, or define what it is, I would make answer, that I should as soon think of describing the abstract human face, or stating what must go to constitute a human being. A fairytale is just a fairytale, as a face is just a face; and of all fairytales I know, I think *Undine* the most beautiful.

Many a man, however, who would not attempt to define *a man*, might venture to say something as to what a man ought to be: even so much I will not in this place venture with regard to the fairytale, for my long past work in that kind might but poorly instance or illustrate my now more matured judgment. I will but say some things helpful to the reading, in right-minded fashion, of such fairytales as I would wish to write, or care to read.

Some thinkers would feel sorely hampered if at liberty to use no forms but such as existed in nature, or to invent nothing save in accordance with the laws of the world of the senses; but it must not therefore be imagined that they desire escape from the region of law. Nothing lawless can show the least reason why it should exist, or could at best have more than an appearance of life.

The natural world has its laws, and no man must interfere with them in the way of presentment any more than in the way of use; but they themselves may suggest laws of other kinds, and man may, if he pleases, invent a little world of his own, with its own laws; for there is that in him which delights in calling up new forms—which is the nearest, perhaps, he can come to creation. When such forms are new embodiments of old truths, we call them products of the Imagination; when they are mere inventions, however lovely, I should call them the work of the Fancy: in either case, Law has been diligently at work.

His world once invented, the highest law that comes next into play is, that there shall be harmony between the laws by which the new world has begun to exist; and in the process of his creation, the inventor must hold by those laws. The moment he forgets one of them, he makes the story, by its own postulates, incredible. To be able to live a moment in an imagined world, we must see the laws of its existence obeyed. Those broken, we fall out of it. The imagination in us, whose exercise is essential to the most temporary submission to the imagination of another, immediately, with the disappearance, of Law, ceases to act. Suppose the gracious creatures of some childlike region of Fairy Land talking either cockney or Gascon! Would not the tale, however lovelily begun, sink at once to the level of the Burlesque—of all forms of literature the least worthy? A man's inventions may be stupid or clever, but if he do not hold by the laws of them, or if he make one law jar with another, he contradicts himself as an inventor, he is no artist. He does not rightly consort his instruments, or he tunes them in different keys. The mind of man is the product of live Law; it thinks by law, it dwells in the midst of law, it gathers from law its growth; with law, therefore, can it alone work to any result. Inharmonious, unconsorting ideas will come to a man, but if he try to use one of such, his work will grow dull, and he will drop it from mere lack of interest. Law is the soil in which alone beauty will grow; beauty is the only stuff in which Truth can be clothed; and you may, if you will, call Imagination the tailor that cuts her garments to fit her, and Fancy his journeyman that puts the pieces of them together, or perhaps at most embroiders their button-holes. Obeying law, the maker works like his creator; not obeying law, he is such a fool as heaps a pile of stones and calls it a church.

In the moral world it is different: there a man may clothe in new forms, and for this employ his imagination freely, but he must invent nothing. He may not, for any purpose, turn its laws upside down. He must not meddle with the relations of live souls. The laws of the spirit of man must hold, alike in this world and in any world he may invent. It were no offence to suppose a world in which everything repelled instead of attracted the things around it; it would be wicked to write a tale representing a man it called good as always doing bad things, or a man it called bad as always doing good things: the notion itself is absolutely lawless. In physical things a man may invent; in moral things he must obey—and take their laws with him into his invented world as well.

"You write as if a fairytale were a thing of importance: must it have a meaning?"

It cannot help having some meaning; if it have proportion and harmony it has vitality, and vitality is truth. The beauty may be plainer in it than the truth, but without the truth the beauty could not be, and the fairytale would give no delight. Everyone, however, who feels the story, will read its meaning after his own nature and development: one man will read one meaning in it, another will read another.

"If so, how am I to assure myself that I am not reading my own meaning into it, but yours out of it?"

Why should you be so assured? It may be better that you should read your meaning into it. That may be a higher operation of your intellect than the mere reading of mine out of it: your meaning may be superior to mine.

"Suppose my child ask me what the fairytale means, what am I to say?"

If you do not know what it means, what is easier than to say so? If you do see a meaning in it, there it is for you to give him. A genuine work of art must mean many things; the truer its art, the more things it will mean. If my drawing, on the other hand, is so far from being a work of art that it needs THIS IS A HORSE written under it, what can it matter that neither you nor your child should know what it means? It is there not so much to convey a meaning as to wake a meaning. If it do not even wake an interest, throw it aside. A meaning may be there, but it is not for you. If, again, you do not know a horse when you see it, the name written under it will not serve you much. At all events, the business of the painter is not to teach zoology.

But indeed your children are not likely to trouble you about the meaning. They find what they are capable of finding, and more would be too much. For my part, I do not write for children, but for the childlike, whether of five, or fifty, or seventy-five.

A fairytale is not an allegory. There may be allegory in it, but it is not an allegory. He must be an artist indeed who can, in any mode, produce a strict allegory that is not a weariness to the spirit. An allegory must be Mastery or Moorditch.

A fairytale, like a butterfly or a bee, helps itself on all sides, sips at every wholesome flower, and spoils not one. The true fairytale is, to my mind, very like the sonata. We all know that a sonata means something; and where there is the faculty of talking with suitable vagueness, and choosing metaphor sufficiently loose, mind may approach mind, in the interpretation of a sonata, with the result of a more or less contenting consciousness of sympathy. But if two or three men sat down to write each what the sonata meant to him, what approximation to definite idea would be the result? Little enough—and that little more than needful. We should find it had roused related, if not identical, feelings, but probably not one common thought. Has the sonata therefore failed? Had it undertaken to convey, or ought it to be expected to impart anything defined, anything notionally recognizable?

"But words are not music; words at least are meant and fitted to carry a precise meaning!"

It is very seldom indeed that they carry the exact meaning of any user of them! And if they can be so used as to convey definite meaning, it does not follow that they ought never to carry anything else. Words are live things that may be variously employed to various ends. They can convey a scientific fact, or throw a shadow of her child's dream on the heart of a mother. They are things to put together like the pieces of a dissected map, or to arrange like the notes on a stave. Is the music in them to go for nothing? It can hardly help the definiteness of a meaning: is it therefore to be disregarded? They have length, and breadth, and outline: have they nothing to do with depth? Have they only to describe, never to impress? Has nothing any claim to their use but the definite? The cause of a child's tears may be altogether undefinable: has the mother therefore no antidote for his vague misery? That may be strong in colour which has no evident outline. A fairytale, a sonata, a gathering storm, a limitless night, seizes you and sweeps you away: do you begin at once to wrestle with it and ask whence its power over you, whither it is carrying you? The law of each is in the mind of its composer; that law makes one man feel this way, another man feel that way. To one the sonata is a world of odour and beauty, to another of soothing only and sweetness. To one, the cloudy rendezvous is a wild dance, with a terror at its heart; to another, a majestic march of heavenly hosts, with Truth in their centre pointing their course, but as yet restraining her voice. The greatest forces lie in the region of the uncomprehended.

I will go farther.—The best thing you can do for your fellow, next to rousing his conscience, is—not to give him things to think about, but to wake things up that are in him; or say, to make him think things for himself. The best Nature does for us is to work in us such moods in which thoughts of high import arise. Does any aspect of Nature wake but one thought? Does she ever suggest only one definite thing? Does she make any two men in the same place at the same moment think the same thing? Is she therefore a failure, because she is not definite? Is it nothing that she rouses the something deeper than the understanding—the power that underlies thoughts? Does she not set feeling, and so thinking at work? Would it be better that she did this after one fashion and not after many fashions? Nature is mood-engendering, thought-provoking: such ought the sonata, such ought the fairytale to be.

"But a man may then imagine in your work what he pleases, what you never meant!"

Not what he pleases, but what he can. If he be not a true man, he will draw evil out of the best; we need not mind how he treats any work of art! If he be a true man, he will imagine true things; what matter whether I meant them or not? They are there none the less that I cannot claim putting them there! One difference between God's work and man's is, that, while God's work cannot mean more than he meant, man's must mean more than he meant. For in everything that God has made, there is layer upon layer of ascending significance; also he expresses the same thought in higher and higher kinds of that thought: it is God's things, his embodied thoughts, which alone a man has to use, modified and adapted to his own purposes, for the expression of his thoughts; therefore he cannot help his words and figures falling into such combinations in the mind of another as he had himself not foreseen, so many are the thoughts allied to every other thought, so many are the relations involved in every figure, so many the facts hinted in every symbol. A man may well himself discover truth in what he wrote; for he was dealing all the time with things that came from thoughts beyond his own.

"But surely you would explain your idea to one who asked you?"

I say again, if I cannot draw a horse, I will not write THIS IS A HORSE under what I foolishly meant for one. Any key to a work of imagination would be nearly, if not quite, as absurd. The tale is there, not to hide, but to show: if it show nothing at your window, do not open your door to it; leave it out in the cold. To ask me to explain, is to say, "Roses! Boil them, or we won't have them!" My tales may not be roses, but I will not boil them.

So long as I think my dog can bark, I will not sit up to bark for him.

If a writer's aim be logical conviction, he must spare no logical pains, not merely to be understood, but to escape being misunderstood; where his object is to move by suggestion, to cause to imagine, then let him assail the soul of his reader as the wind assails an aeolian harp. If there be music in my reader, I would gladly wake it. Let fairytale of mine go for a firefly that now flashes, now is dark, but may flash again. Caught in a hand which does not love its kind, it will turn to an insignificant, ugly thing, that can neither flash nor fly.

The best way with music, I imagine, is not to bring the forces of our intellect to bear upon it, but to be still and let it work on that part of us for whose sake it exists. We spoil countless precious things by intellectual greed. He who will be a man, and will not be a child, must—he cannot help himself—become a little man, that is, a dwarf. He will, however, need no consolation, for he is sure to think himself a very large creature indeed.

If any strain of my "broken music" make a child's eyes flash, or his mother's grow for a moment dim, my labour will not have been in vain.

HENRY HOLBEACH,
"GEORGE MACDONALD,"
THE CONTEMPORARY REVIEW, DECEMBER 1, 1871

We are referring to this point because it is related to a curious question which arises between Mr. MacDonald's prose and his poetry, and to the question generally of his ordination. When we come to look at his prose writings, there is a change—

> "A fuller light illumined all,
> A breeze through all the garden swept,
> A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
> And sixty feet the fountain leapt."

No, the "light" is not "fuller," it is of necessity more broken; but there is more movement in the air, and this is one reason why loving students of his writings, and good judges too, have set down his prose narratives of real life as his best work. The author's genius is, in them, obviously seeking, gathering, and binding, and the impression of power is proportionately stronger. In the stories of phantasy—notably in "Phantastes" itself—we receive, as in the poetry, a sort of impression that the author's genius is something that only lies or sits and watches a mirror and occasionally longs; and the procession of "sights," to use Macbeth's word, looks too often as if it "couldn't help it." And the farther we get from the sphere of pure poetry, the more does this impression about the product before us weaken. Nevertheless do we adhere to the opinion that Mr. MacDonald is truly and primarily a poet. It is in his poems that we find what perfect work he has done, and in them that we have opened to us the highest and sweetest sources of pleasure. There is a great deal more in "Robert Falconer " than there is in the "Somnium Mystici," "The Child Mother," "The Grace of Grace," or "Light;" but the latter have the unlimited and yet concentrated value that belong to all poetry, and indeed, to all works of high art: in which, by the exclusion of what may be called the infirmities of the topic, and the (more or less successful) effort after perfect harmony of form and idea, the infinite is as abundantly suggested to the mind as it possibly can be by any human work. We would give a good deal of fine prose for this little song from "Phantastes":—

> "Alas, how easily things go wrong!
> A sigh too much, or a kiss too long!
> And there follows a mist and a weeping rain,
> And life is never the same again.
>
> "Alas, how hardly things go right!
> 'Tis hard to watch in a summer night,
> For the sigh will come, and the kiss will stay,
> And the summer night is a winter day."

Yet much of Mr. MacDonald's prose is of the very highest excellence, considered as to both content and form. . . .

In richness and variety of conception "Phantastes," which received a warm word—perhaps many warm words—from Dickens, takes so high a place in the collection, that we hardly know what should rank before it. The symbols are easily read by an apprehensive mind; and how rapidly and easily they succeed, and "hang on," and interweave in this wonderful story of the man who went out to seek his ideal, and ended by being glad at having lost his shadow! Yet "Phantastes," rich in beauty and meaning, has grave faults. The machinery, so to call it, works with a little of the hardness and coldness of a young imagination; the symbols have not nested long enough to get warm and full-feathered; they are just a little callow. Then, again, we feel the want of a little more padding. There are one or two delicious bits of humour—that about the wooden men, for example—but not enough of them. The only way of making a tale of this kind go smoothly is to let superfluous matters-matters quite extraneous to the design, and yet honestly co-ordinated with the rest—slip or glide in, and act as buffers here and there. The thing as it stands wants flesh, or unction, except towards the close, where there is too much of the latter in another sense. The intellectual ground-plan shows too plainly through the symbols; and here, just where we want haze, we do not get it, but, on the contrary, everything fits into every other with the nicety, and the hardness, of mosaic work. There is another fault: towards the close the frame-work is over-weighted, and we almost fancy some leaves of "The Pilgrim's Progress" have got slipped in by mistake. Not that there is anything which did not lie within the scope and prime conception of the work, but that the gradations are abrupt, and the morality far too obtrusive. Great part of pp. 168 and 169 is so bad so, very bad—that the reader, after so much delight, scarcely knows how to forgive this rude breaking of the spell. But in spite of his exquisite sensibility, there is some lack of the instinct of gradation in Mr. MacDonald's mind, though it is not easy to define where it is. We feel it when the little fairy of the dead rose-leaves leaps on to the floor at the opening. This is a Contes des Fées touch, thoroughly French. Then the stepping from the bed-chamber into Arcadia is damaged by too much detail—that about the ivyleaves, for example. Neither can we relish a Greek name for a knight in fairy-land, and the "chamber of Sir Anodos" jars. The narrator had better have gone without a name: the significance of this does not reward us for its incongruity. The phrase "church of darkness," too, later on, strikes an utterly incongruous note. We are quite certain of the justness of these criticisms, and they might be extended. The puzzle is that a writer of such a fine tactile truthfulness (if the phrase may be lawfully coined) should make such mistakes. It does not meet the case to reply that there are spots in the sun; for these blots do not look like the necessary consequences of temperament or natural habit; but like, so to speak, exotic faults. We presume it is the result of the author's early training, and of a bent contracted in his pulpit experience and the approaches to it. At all events, he sometimes rips up his allegory before your very eyes in a most irritating manner. . . .

Appendix E:
Arthur Hughes's Illustrations for the 1905 Edition

In his retrospective review of *Phantastes* in 1906 (see Appendix B), Edward Stanley Robertson observes that he first read the novel in 1858 but is now using a new edition by MacDonald's son, Greville, who commissioned Arthur Hughes to illustrate: "I hope I am not ungrateful, but though I admire Mr. Hughes's illustrations, on the whole, I prefer my own plain copy. Methinks the reader should illustrate his 'Phantastes' for himself; the mental picture is better than the material one." The nineteenth-century had a rich tradition of melding the visual with the verbal in novels—illustrations were central to many works. George Cruikshank, who illustrated Charles Dickens's *Sketches by Boz* (1833-36) and *Oliver Twist* (1837-39) before having a feud about the purpose of fairy tales (see Appendix D), cemented his reputation earlier with his illustrations for Edgar Taylor's translation of the Brothers Grimm's *German Popular Stories*, which was published in 1823. The preeminent art critic of the nineteenth-century John Ruskin, a friend and confidante of George MacDonald, wrote a glowing review of Cruikshank's illustrations in his 1868 introduction to a new edition of *German Popular Stories.* Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871) were illustrated by John Tenniel—and they are some of the most famous book illustrations of the nineteenth century. MacDonald had a long relationship with Hughes and had him illustrate his most important fairy tales, including *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871) and *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872). In this appendix, Jan Susina, in an original essay for this edition of *Phantastes*, examines the quality of Hughes's illustrations and addresses the concerns that Robertson had back in 1906—is it wise to illustrate *Phantastes* when the 1858 edition was not intended to be illustrated? Of note is the fact that *Lilith* (1895), a companion fantasy to *Phantastes*, was never commissioned by Greville to be illustrated. Why only *Phantastes*? Should we heed Robertson's advice and emphasize the mental picture created in our imagination? Or should we embrace the material picture to enhance our reading experience?

GREVILLE MACDONALD,
PREFACE TO THE 1905 EDITION OF PHANTASTES

For offering this new edition of my father's *Phantastes*, my reasons are three. The first is to rescue the work from an edition illustrated without the author's sanction, and so unsuitably that all lovers of the book must have experienced some real grief in turning its pages. With the copyright I secured also the whole of that edition and turned it into pulp.

My second reason is to pay a small tribute to my father by way of personal gratitude for this, his first prose work, which was published nearly fifty years ago. Though unknown to many lovers of his greater writings, none of these has exceeded it in imaginative insight and power of expression. To me it rings with the dominant chord of his life's purpose and work.

My third reason is that wider knowledge and love of the book should be made possible. To this end I have been most happy in the help of my father's old friend, who has illustrated the book. I know of no other living artist who is capable of portraying the spirit of *Phantastes*; and every reader of this edition will, I believe, feel that the illustrations are a part of the romance, and will gain through them some perception of the brotherhood between George MacDonald and Arthur Hughes.

GREVILLE MACDONALD.
September 1905.

Not so Grand, or so Strong, but always Lovely: Arthur Hughes's Illustrations to George MacDonald's *Phantastes*

Jan Susina

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Arthur Hughes's illustrations to George MacDonald's *Phantastes* have a kind of magic mirror relationship to the text in that they tend to appear and then disappear with the various editions of the fantasy novel. Perhaps that is fitting since MacDonald declared in chapter 10 of *Phantastes*, "All mirrors are magic mirrors" (73). In many ways Hughes's illustrations mirror the text reflecting MacDonald's mysterious and highly symbolic narrative. But as MacDonald went on to observe about mirrors and their reflections, "Why are all reflections lovelier than what we call reality? —not so grand or so strong, it may be, but always lovelier?" (73). MacDonald's discussion of the relationship between mirrors and reality is a useful way to understand Hughes's illustrations to *Phantastes*. The illustrations are not so grand or so strong as MacDonald's text, but they are lovely, and, perhaps, on occasion, lovelier than MacDonald's prose descriptions of Fairy Land.

Hughes's thirty-three illustrations have a loose relationship to MacDonald's text. The first edition of *Phantastes* was published in 1858 by Smith, Elder and Co. without illustrations. A subsequent edition, published in 1894 by Chatto and Windus, included twenty-five illustrations by artist, John Bell. Hughes's illustrations appeared in the third edition, published by Arthur C. Fifield in 1905, under the supervision of Greville MacDonald. One could say the third time was the charm when it came to the illustrations of *Phantastes*. Certainly Greville MacDonald felt that was the case, as he explained in his short, but tart preface.

In the preface, Greville MacDonald provides three reasons for publishing the new edition of *Phantastes*. His first motivation was "to rescue the work from an edition illustrated without the author's sanction, and so unsuitably that all lovers of the book must have experienced some real grief in turning its pages. With the copyright I secured also the whole of that edition and turned it into pulp" (vii). Bell's illustrations often resemble unfinished sketches rather than completed illustrations. Greville MacDonald would again mention the family's disappointment with Bell's illustrations in *Reminiscences of a Specialist* (1932) when he quotes from a letter by Louisa MacDonald, in which his mother complained:

> It made me groan—within me and aloud—that that wondrous "*Phantastes*" should have been so degraded by Sunday-at-homish, bad art. Have you seen its worse than pantomime scratchings of silly columbines and jumping jacks? That holy fairy book! I can't bear to think of it . . . Oh! Only if it had fallen into Arthur Hughes' hands! (326)

Bell's illustrations fail to capture the feeling for the fantastic and the strong line of Hughes's illustrations. It is difficult to compare Bell's set of illustrations to those of Hughes since the two artists selected different passages of the text to highlight. Bell's drawings lack the imaginative and otherworldly spark that Hughes is able to evoke. Bell's drawings appear cartoonish rather than mysterious. He is more successful in drawing his human figures, but disappoints when it comes to Fairy Land and its inhabitants. His drawing of Anodos watching the goblins dance and sing from chapter 16 of *Phantastes* reveals his artistic limitations (Figure 1). While an illustrator is free to represent goblins as he chooses, there is a long English visual tradition that features them as human-like creatures about the size of young children wearing peasant clothing. In contrast, Bell's goblins are skinny animal-like creatures with wiry hair and several of them appear to be wearing grass skirts. Rather than goblins, they resemble Medieval grotesques. The strongest element in the drawing is the mountain landscape rather than Anodos or the roughly-drawn goblins. All the goblins appear to be the same size, despite some of them clearly intended to be in the distance.

In contrast, Hughes had developed a long and close working relationship with George MacDonald having illustrated *Dealings with the Fairies* (1867), *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871), *Ranald Bannerman's Boyhood* (1871), *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872), and *Gutta Percha Willie* (1873). The collaboration between the author and illustrator began when MacDonald became the editor of *Good Words for the Young*, where many of MacDonald's children's stories first appeared with illustrations by Hughes. Over time, Hughes had become the in-house illustrator of choice for the entire MacDonald family, having illustrated Louisa MacDonald's *Chamber Dramas for Children* (1870), as well as three collections of Greville MacDonald's fairy tales: *The Magic Crook or the Stolen Baby* (1911), *Trystie's Quest; or Kit King of the Pigwidgeons* (1912), and *Jack and Jill* (1913). Hughes had also illustrated *Babies' Classics* (1903), a collection of verses for children composed by well-known poets that had been originally selected by Lilia Scott MacDonald. With her death in 1890, the volume was completed by Winifred Troup, another of MacDonald's daughters. The close relationship between Hughes and MacDonald extended beyond that of a sympathetic working relationship. Arthur Hughes's nephew, Edward R. Hughes, known to family and friends as Ted Hughes, had been engaged to Mary MacDonald before her death from consumption in 1879. Hughes's illustrations to *Phantastes* would be his final collaboration with George MacDonald prior to the author's death in 1905, although Hughes would continue to illustrate Greville MacDonald's collections of fairy tales. He died in 1915.

Greville and Louisa MacDonald may have been unduly harsh in their criticism of Bell's illustrations. Raphael B. Shaberman has found at least one reviewer from the *Saturday Review* who felt differently and called the book, "a pretty edition . . . which Mr. Bell has illustrated with considerable sympathy and grace." (12). Nevertheless, Bell's illustrations add little to the volume. The prettiness that the review mentions can be found in the various females that Anodos meets in Fairy Land, who resemble shapely heroines more suited for a Victorian romance novel (Figure 2). Bell's illustrations emphasize the cuteness of fairyland and misses MacDonald's shadowy and mysterious world.

Clearly Hughes was a family friend and the family's personal choice of illustrator for the book. In *Reminiscences of a Specialist*, Greville MacDonald called upon Hughes after Louisa MacDonald expressed her distaste for Bell's illustrations. Hughes, by this time, was elderly, but his work still charmed the MacDonald family: "Following my mother's suggestion, I gave Arthur Hughes a free hand in illustrating it. That old friend was almost past his best imaginative work; but his hand had not lost its cunning and the drawings had much of his early charm, while some were even strong" (326). In his preface to *Phantastes*, Greville MacDonald explains that another reason for publishing the new edition is that he hoped it would increase the book's readership and allow for increased appreciation:

> To this end I have been most happy in the help of my father's old friend, who has illustrated the book. I know of no other living artist who is capable of portraying the spirit of

> *Phantastes*; and every reader of this edition will, I believe, feel that the illustrations are a part of the romance, and will gain through them some perception of the brotherhood between George MacDonald and Arthur Hughes. (vii)

No higher compliment could be given to Hughes's illustrations to MacDonald's books than this one by Greville MacDonald. Produced when the artist was seventy-three years old, Hughes's illustrations may not be as impressive as those that he did earlier for MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind*, or *The Princess and the Goblin*, but they do effectively capture the spirit and tone of the novel. While the *Phantastes* illustrations may not be the most grand, or strongest set of book illustrations drawn by Hughes, they remain lovely. The *Phantastes* illustrations tend to recycle images from Hughes's previous work. Like a band playing its greatest hits, the *Phantastes* illustrations are satisfying, but break no new visual ground. The chief pleasure is seeing MacDonald's text reunited with Hughes's illustrations one last time.

What is interesting about Hughes's illustrations to *Phantastes* is the way he echoes and recycles some of his previous illustrations to earlier MacDonald volumes and other children's texts. The illustration, "I was dead, and right content," from chapter 24 of *Phantastes* uses the same staircase that Irene would climb in chapter 11 of *The Princess and the Goblin* (Figure 3). The playful goblins that appear in the headpiece to chapter 4 of *Phantastes* are clearly brothers to the goblins that appear in the illustration to Christina Rossetti's "In the meadow-what in the meadow?" from *Sing-Song: A Nursery Rhyme Book* (1872) (Figure 4). The elderly female ogre that Anodos meets in chapter 8 of *Phantastes*, who appears in the illustration to the passage "A runner with ghostly feet," is similar to the old hag bending down to pour poison into a phial in the illustration of "The Miser and his Nurse" from MacDonald's fairy tale "The Shadows," which appeared in *Dealings with the Fairies* (Figure 5). The giant hand descending on Anodos in chapter 4 of *Phantastes* in the illustration, "I felt two large soft arms thrown round me from behind," would not be out of place in the grotesque images found in Christina Rossetti's *Speaking Likenesses* (1874) (Figure 6).

While the similarities with his previous illustrations might suggest a consistency, or even limitation in Hughes's drawing style, it also helps link *Phantastes* to MacDonald's previous stories illustrated by Hughes and situates the novel into the rich Victorian tradition of fairy tales and fantasy. Greville's other stated motivation for republishing *Phantastes* was "to pay a small tribute to my father by way of personal gratitude for, this his first prose work, which was published fifty years ago" (vii). By the time that Greville commissioned Hughes to illustrate *Phantastes*, George MacDonald's health was so poor that it is doubtful the Greville ever showed them to his father, or at this point in time they would have made a lasting impression on him. It is fitting that Arthur Hughes, MacDonald's first and most frequent illustrator, would eventually illustrate MacDonald's first prose volume and that this edition of *Phantastes* would become his final collaboration with the author. As is often the situation in fairy tales, events and characters appear in groupings of three, with the third son or the third wish becoming the most successful, or powerful of the group. That is certainly the case with the third edition of *Phantastes* featuring Arthur Hughes's illustrations becoming the most successful and satisfying version of MacDonald's tale.

Hughes's *Phantastes* illustrations have a loose association with MacDonald's text. They were commissioned by his son as a tribute to the extensive and productive working relationship between MacDonald and Hughes. Greville viewed the commission as a way to help his father's long-time friend and to help exorcise the memory of Bell's illustrations which were so disappointing to the MacDonald family. Later editions of *Phantastes*, including this one, have chosen not to include Hughes's illustrations and thus follow the intention of the original 1858 edition. While Greville assumed that he had successfully purchased and destroyed all the copies of *Phantastes* with Bell's illustration, that was not the case. Nevertheless, they have rarely been reprinted. Hughes's illustrations provide a satisfying coda to *Phantastes*, although they are not an essential element of the book.

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FIGURE 1: JOHN BELL'S ILLUSTRATION FROM *PHANTASTES* (1894)

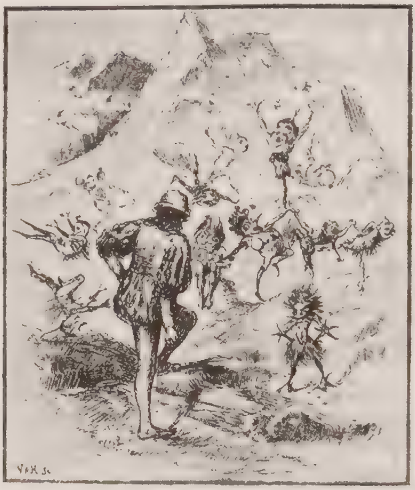


FIGURE 2: JOHN BELL'S ILLUSTRATION FROM *PHANTASTES* THAT FEATURES ONE OF THE FEMALES ANODOS MEETS IN FAIRY LAND

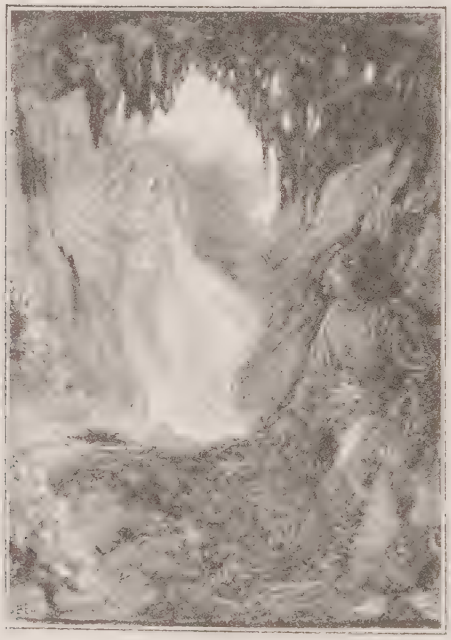


FIGURE 3: ARTHUR HUGHES'S ILLUSTRATION FROM GEORGE MACDONALD'S *THE PRINCESS AND THE GOBLIN* (1872) PAIRED WITH HIS ILLUSTRATION FROM MACDONALD'S *PHANTASTES* (1895)

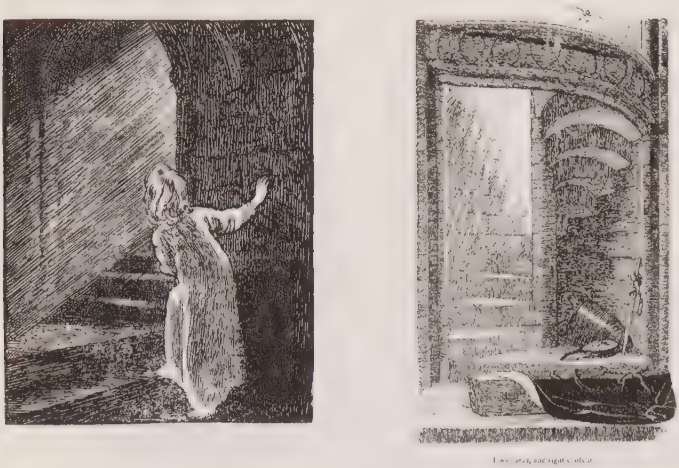


FIGURE 4: HUGHES'S ILLUSTRATION FROM CHRISTINA ROSSETTI'S *SING-SONG: RHYME BOOK* (1872) PAIRED WITH AN ILLUSTRATION FROM *PHANTASTES* (1905)

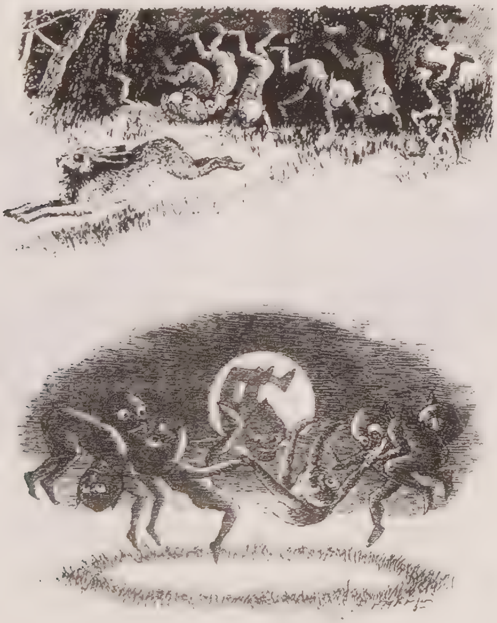


Figure 5: Hughes's illustration from MacDonald's "The Shadow" in *Dealings with Fairies* (1867) paired with an illustration from *Phantastes* (1905)

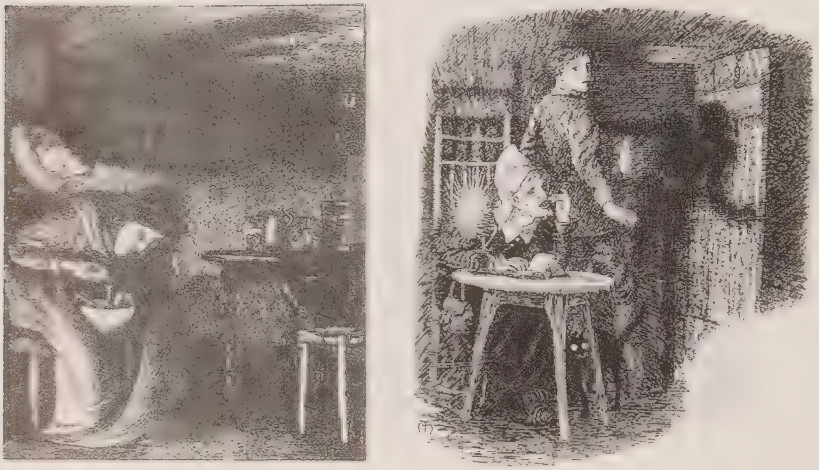
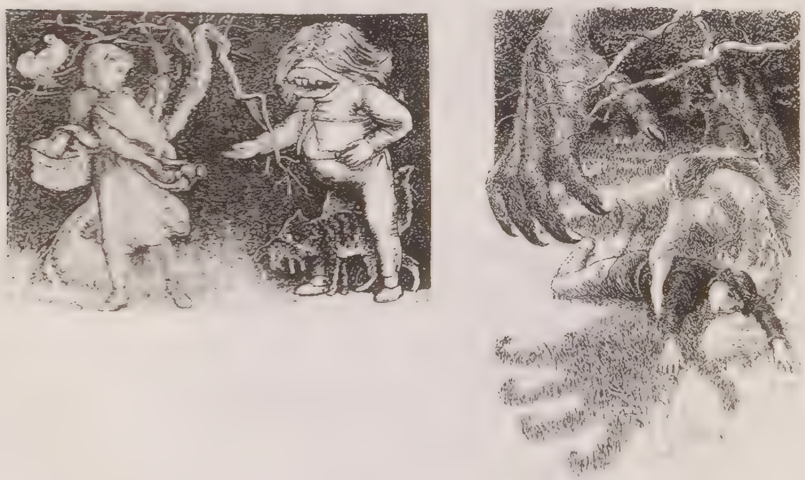
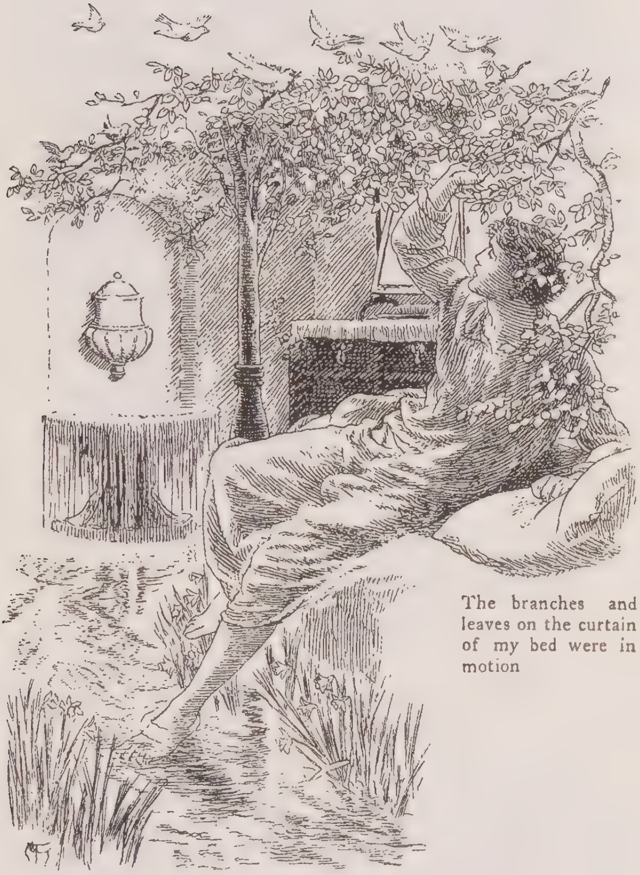


Figure 6: Hughes's illustration from Christina Rossetti's *Speaking Likenesses* (1872) paired with an illustration from *Phantases* (1905)



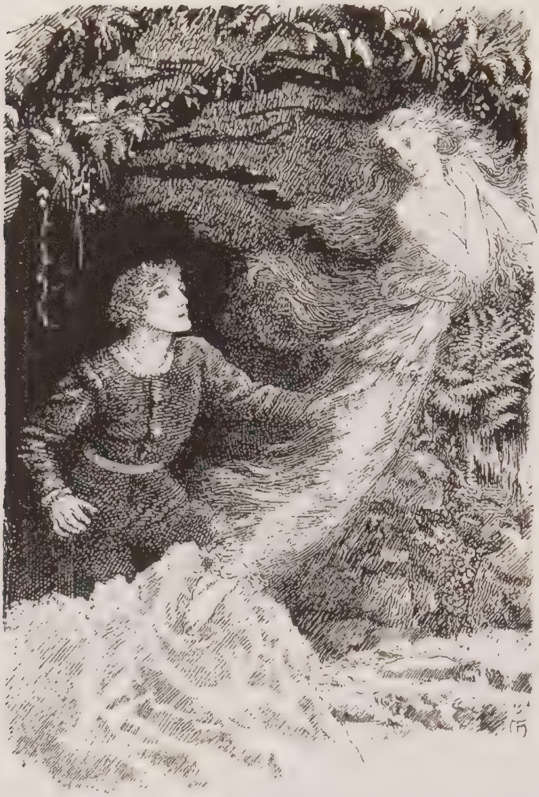
From Arthur Hughes's Illustrations of *Phantastes* (1905)

From Chapter II



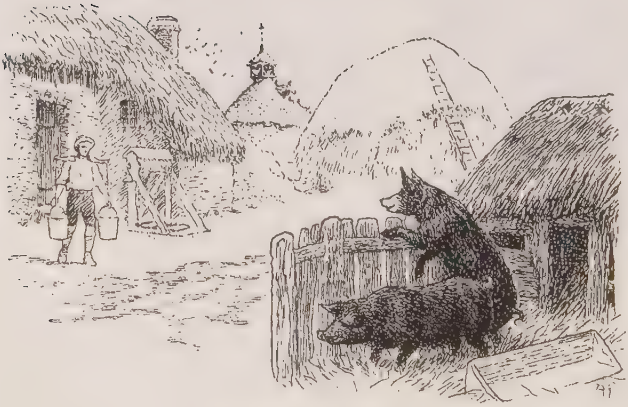
The branches and leaves on the curtain of my bed were in motion

From Chapter V



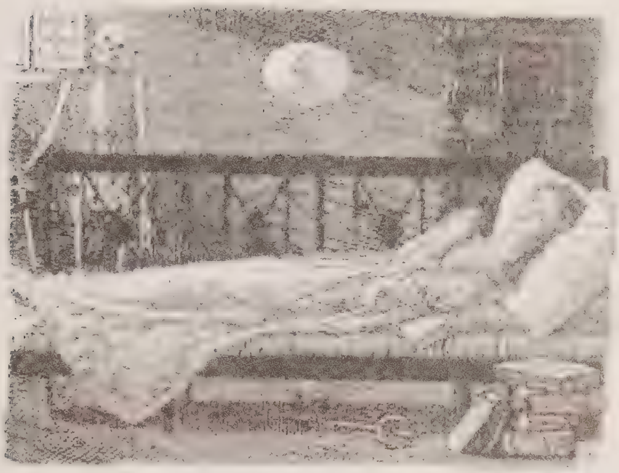
I gazed after her in a kind of despair

From Chapter XXII



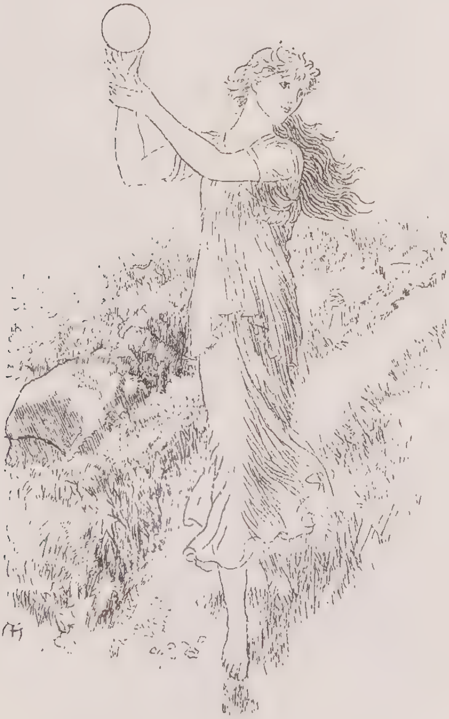
I did not believe in Fairy Land

From Chapter XXIII



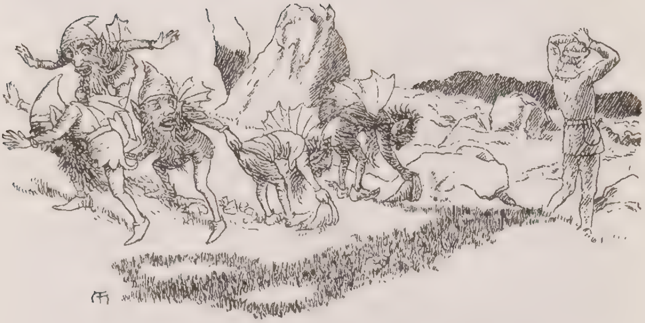
She lay with closed eyes, whence two tears were just welling

From Chapter IX



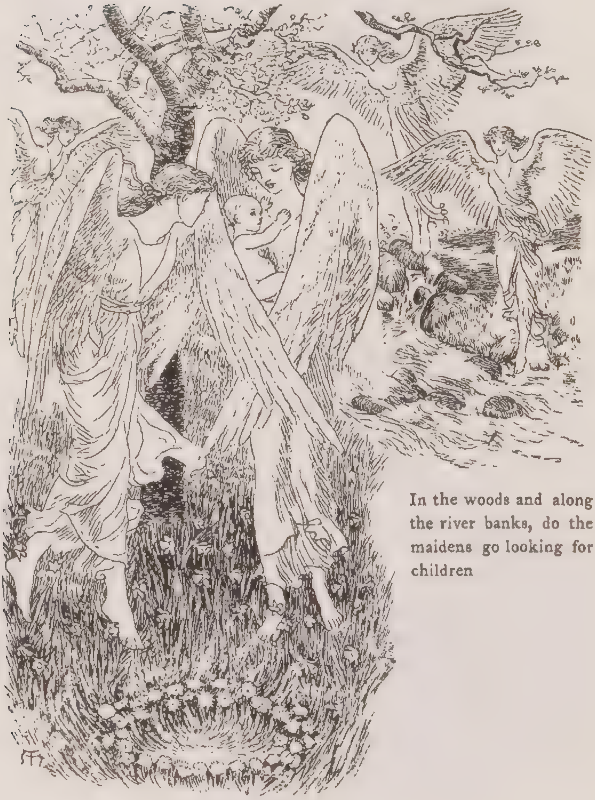
The maiden came along singing and dancing,
happy as a child

From Chapter X



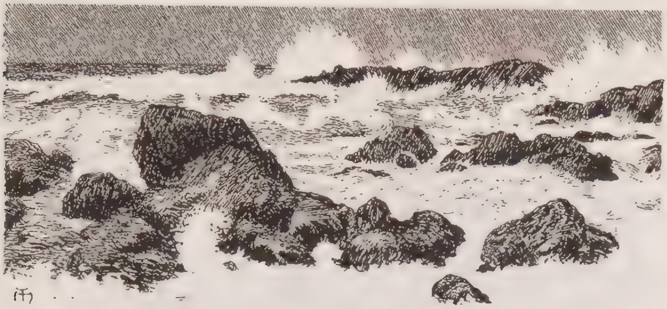
The goblins performed the most antic homage

From Chapter XII



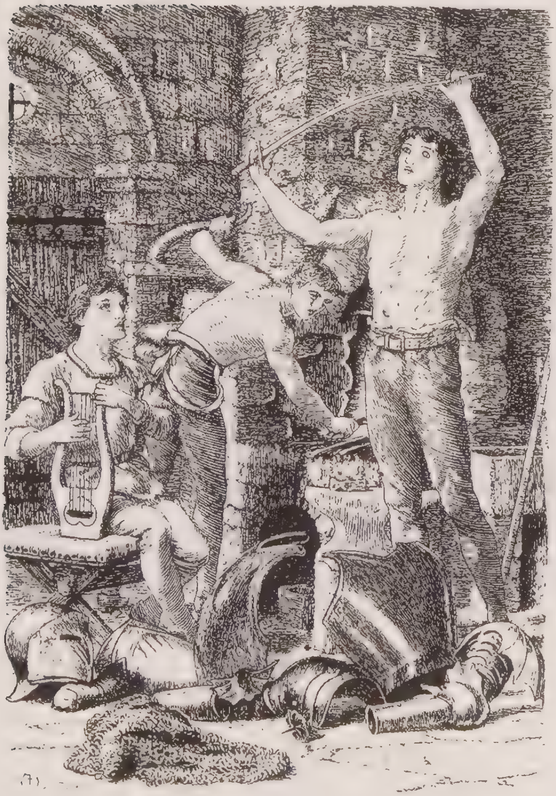
In the woods and along the river banks, do the maidens go looking for children

From Chapter XVIII



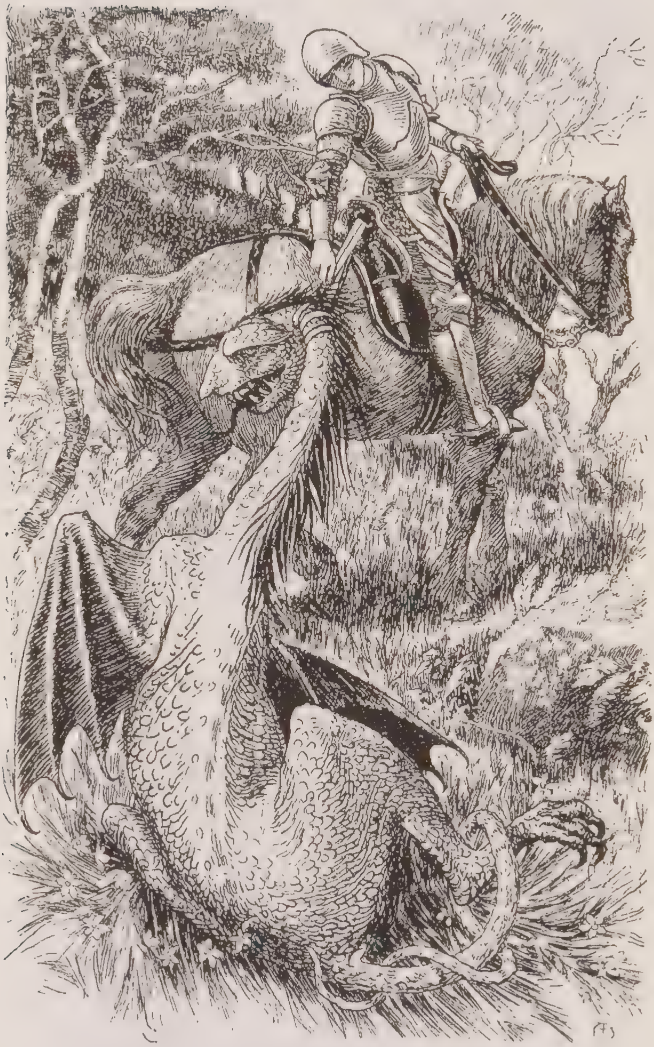
A wintry sea, bare, and waste, and gray

From Chapter XX



The time passed away in work and song

From Chapter XXIII



Fastened to the saddle was the body of a great dragon

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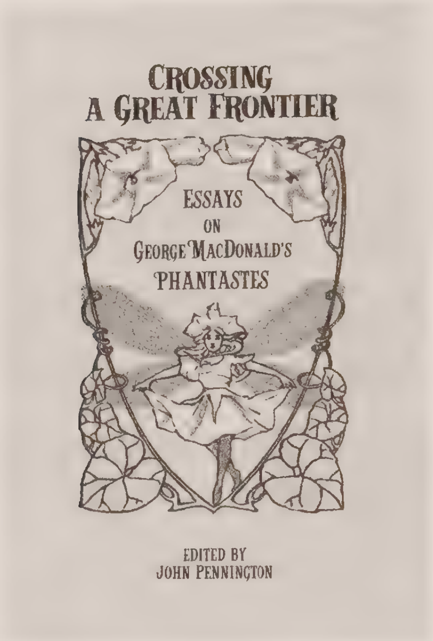

CROSSING
A GREAT FRONTIER

ESSAYS
ON
GEORGE MACDONALD'S
PHANTASTES

EDITED BY
JOHN PENNINGTON

Crossing a Great Frontier: Essays on George MacDonald's Phantastes
John Pennington, Editor

This is the first collection of scholarly essays on George MacDonald's seminal romance *Phantastes* (1858). Largely ignored for a hundred years after its publication, *Phantastes* began to come into notice through the enthusiasm of C. S. Lewis and the growing popularity of fantastic literature in the 1960s; now it is a key work in university courses on fantasy. Appropriately to the age of its hero Anodos, here we have twenty-one of the best essays written on *Phantastes* from 1972 onwards, in which straightforward literary analysis works together with contextual, psychological, metaphysical, alchemical and scientific approaches to the elucidation of this moving and elusive work. While it is unlikely that the meaning of *Phantastes* will ever be fully understood, these essays demonstrate how much it stimulates readers, and how many suggestive riches it contains.

—Colin Manlove, author of *Scotland's Forgotten Treasure: The Visionary Novels of George MacDonald*

C. S. LEWIS

C. S. Lewis: Views From Wake Forest - Essays on C. S. Lewis
Michael Travers, editor

Contains sixteen scholarly presentations from the international C. S. Lewis convention in Wake Forest, NC. Walter Hooper shares his important essay "Editing C. S. Lewis," a chronicle of publishing decisions after Lewis' death in 1963.

"Scholars from a variety of disciplines address a wide range of issues. The happy result is a fresh and expansive view of an author who well deserves this kind of thoughtful attention."

Diana Pavlac Glyer, author of *The Company They Keep*

The Hidden Story of Narnia:
A Book-By-Book Guide to Lewis' Spiritual Themes
Will Vaus

A book of insightful commentary equally suited for teens or adults – Will Vaus points out connections between the *Narnia* books and spiritual/biblical themes, as well as between ideas in the *Narnia* books and C. S. Lewis' other books. Learn what Lewis himself said about the overarching and unifying thematic structure of the Narnia books. That is what this book explores; what C. S. Lewis called "the hidden story" of Narnia. Each chapter includes questions for individual use or small group discussion.

Why I Believe in Narnia:
33 Reviews and Essays on the Life and Work of C. S. Lewis
James Como

Chapters range from reviews of critical books , documentaries and movies to evaluations of Lewis' books to biographical analysis.

"A valuable , wide-ranging collection of essays by one of the best informed and most accute commentators on Lewis' work and ideas."

Peter Schakel, author of *Imagination & the Arts in C. S. Lewis*

C. S. Lewis: His Literary Achievement
Colin Manlove

"This is a positively brilliant book, written with splendor, elegance, profundity and evidencing an enormous amount of learning. This is probably not a book to give a first-time reader of Lewis. But for those who are more broadly read in the Lewis corpus this book is an absolute gold mine of information. The author gives us a magnificent overview of Lewis' many writings, tracing for us thoughts and ideas which recur throughout, and at the same time telling us how each book differs from the others. I think it is not extravagant to call C. S. Lewis: His Literary Achievement a tour de force."

Robert Merchant, *St. Austin Review*, Book Review Editor

In the Footsteps of C. S. Lewis: A Photographic Pilgrimage to the British Isles
Will Vaus

Over the course of thirty years, Will Vaus has journeyed to the British Isles many times to walk in the footsteps of C. S. Lewis. His private photographs of the significant places in Lewis' life have captured the imagination of audiences in the US and UK to whom he has lectured on the Oxford don and his work. This, in turn, prompted the idea of this collection of 78 full-color photographs, interwoven with details about Lewis' life and work. The combination of words and pictures make this a wonderful addition to the library of all Lewis scholars and readers.

Speaking of Jack: A C. S. Lewis Discussion Guide
Will Vaus

C. S. Lewis Societies have been forming around the world since the first one started in New York City in 1969. Will Vaus has started and led three groups himself. *Speaking of Jack* is the result of Vaus' experience in leading those Lewis Societies. Included here are introductions to most of Lewis' books as well as questions designed to stimulate discussion about Lewis' life and work. These materials have been "road-tested" with real groups made up of young and old, some very familiar with Lewis and some newcomers. *Speaking of Jack* may be used in an existing book discussion group, to start a C. S. Lewis Society, or as a guide to your own exploration of Lewis' books.

Light: C.S. Lewis's First and Final Short Story
Charlie W. Starr
Foreword by Walter Hooper

Charlie Starr explores the questions surrounding the "Light" manuscript, a later version of story titled "A Man Born Blind." The insights into this story provide a na ew key to understanding some of Lewis's most profound ideas.

"As literary journalism, both investigative and critical, it is top shelf"
James Como, author of *Remembering C. S. Lewis*

"Starr shines a new and illuninating light on one of Lewis's most intriguing stories"
Michael Ward, author of *Planet Narnia*

C. S. Lewis & Philosophy as a Way of Life: His Philosophical Thoughts
Adam Barkman

C. S. Lewis is rarely thought of as a "philosopher" per se despite having both studied and taught philosophy for several years at Oxford. Lewis's long journey to Christianity was essentially philosophical – passing through seven different stages. This 624 page book is an invaluable reference for C. S. Lewis scholars and fans alike

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C. S. Lewis' Top Ten: Influential Books and Authors, Volume One
Will Vaus

Based on his books, marginal notes, and personal letters, Will Vaus explores Lewis' reading of the ten books he said shaped his vocational attitude and philosophy of life. Volume One covers the first three authors/books: George MacDonald: *Phantastes*, G.K. Chesterton: *The Everlasting Man*, and Virgil: *The Aneid*. Vaus offers a brief biography of each author with a helpful summary of their books.

"Thorough, comprehensive, and illuminating"
Rolland Hein, Author of *George MacDonald: Victorian Mythmaker*

C. S. Lewis' Top Ten: Influential Books and Authors, Volume Two
Will Vaus

Volume Two covers the following authors/books: George Herbert: *The Temple*, William Wordsworth: *The Prelude*, Rudopf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy.*

C. S. Lewis' Top Ten: Influential Books and Authors, Volume Three
Will Vaus

Volume Three covers the following authors/books: Boethius: *The Consolation of Philosophy*, James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, Charles Williams: *Descent into Hell*, A.J. Balfour: *Thiesm and Humanism.*

C. S. Lewis Goes to Heaven:
A Reader's Guide to The Great Divorce
David G. Clark

This is the first book devoted solely to this often neglected book and the first to reveal several important secrets Lewis concealed within the story. Lewis felt his imaginary trip to Hell and Heaven was far better than his book *The Screwtape Letters*, which has become a classic. Readers will discover the many literary and biblical influences Lewis utilized in writing his brilliant novel.

C. S. Lewis Goes to Hell
A Companion and Study Guide to The Screwtape Letters
William O'Flaherty

The creator and host of "All About Jack" (a podcast feature of EssentialCSLewis.com) has written a guide to *The Screwtape Letters* suitable for groups or individuals. Features include a topic index of major and minor themes, summaries of each letter, questions for reflection, and over a half-dozen appendices of useful information.

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Joy and Poetic Imagination: Understanding C. S. Lewis's "Great War" with Owen Barfield and its Significance for Lewis's Conversion and Writings

Stephen Thorson

Author Stephen Thorson began writing this book over 30 years ago and published parts of it in articles during Barfield's lifetime. Barfield wrote to Thorson in 1983 saying, ""*...you have surveyed the divergence between Lewis and myself very fairly, and truly 'in depth...*'". This book explains the "Great War" between these two friends.

Exploring the Eternal Goodness: Selected Writings of David L. Neuhouser

Joe Ricke and Lisa Ritchie, Editors

In 1997, due to David's perseverance, the Brown Collection of books by and about C. S. Lewis and related authors came to Taylor University and the Lewis and Friends Colloquium began. This book of selected writings reflects his scholarship in math and literature, as well as his musings on beauty and the imagination. The twenty-one tributes are an indication of the many lives he has influenced. This book is meant to acknowledge David L. Neuhouser for his contributions to scholarship and to honor his life of friendship, encouragement, and genuine goodness.

Inklings Forever, Volume X: Proceedings from the 10th Francis White Ewbank Colloquiunm on C.S. Lewis & Friends

Joe Ricke and Rick Hill, Editors

In June 2016, the 10th biennial Frances Ewbank Colloquium on C. S. Lewis and Friends convened at Taylor University with the special theme of "friendship." Many of the essays and creative pieces collected in this book explore the important relationships of Inklings-related authors, as well as the relationships between those authors and other, sometimes rather surprising, "friends." The year 2016 marked the 90th anniversary of the first meeting of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien – a creative friendship of epic proportions

What a feast! It is rare that a book of proceedings captures the energy and spirit of the conference itself: this one does. I recommend it.

> Diana Pavlac Glyer, Professor of English at Azusa Pacific University and author of *The Company They Keep* and *Bandersnatch: C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and the Creative Collaboration of the Inklings*

Mythopoeic Narnia: Memory, Metaphor, and Metamorphoses in C. S. Lewis's The Chronicles of Narnia

Salwa Khoddam

Dr. Khoddam offers a fresh approach to the *Narnia* books based on an inquiry into Lewis' readings and use of classical and Christian symbols. She explores the literary and intellectual contexts of these stories, the traditional myths and motifs, and places them in the company of the greatest Christian mythopoeic works of Western Literature.

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Keys to Growth: Meditations on the Acts of the Apostles
Will Vaus

Every living thing or person requires certain ingredients in order to grow, and if a thing or person is not growing, it is dying. *The Acts of the Apostles* is a book that is all about growth. Will Vaus has been meditating and preaching on *Acts* for the past 30 years. In this volume, he offers the reader forty-one keys from the entire book of Acts to unlock spiritual growth in everyday life.

Open Before Christmas: Devotional Thoughts For The Holiday Season
Will Vaus

Author Will Vaus seeks to deepen the reader's knowledge of Advent and Christmas leading up to Epiphany. Readers are provided with devotional thoughts for each day that help them to experience this part of the Church Year perhaps in a more spiritually enriching way than ever before.

"Seasoned with inspiring, touching, and sometimes humorous illustrations .... I found his writing immediately engaging and, the more I read, the more I liked it. God has touched my heart by reading Open Before Christmas, and I believe he will touch your heart too."
The Rev. David Beckmann, The C.S. Lewis Society of Chattanooga

God's Love Letter: Reflections on I John
Will Vaus

Various words for "love" appear thirty-five times in the five brief chapters of I John. This book invites you on a journey of reading and reflection: reading this book in the New Testament and reflecting on God's love for us, our love for God, and our love for one another.

Jogging with G.K. Chsterton: 65 Earthshaking Expeditions
Robert Moore-Jumonville

Jogging with G.K. Chesterton is a showcase for the merry mind of Chesterton. But Chesterton's lighthearted wit always runs side-by-side with his weighty wisdom. These 65 "earthshaking expeditions" will keep you smiling and thinking from start to finish. You'll be entertained, challenged, and spiritually uplifted as you take time to breath in the fresh morning air and contemplate the wonders of the world.

"This is a delightfully improbable book in which Chesterton puts us through our spiritual and intellectual exercises."
Joseph Pearce, author of *Wisdom and Innocence: A Life of G.K. Chesterton*

GEORGE MACDONALD

Diary of an Old Soul & The White Page Poems
George MacDonald and Betty Aberlin

The first edition of George MacDonald's book of daily poems included a blank page opposite each page of poems. Readers were invited to write their own reflections on the "white page." MacDonald wrote: "Let your white page be ground, my print be seed, growing to golden ears, that faith and hope may feed." Betty Aberlin responded to MacDonald's invitation with daily poems of her own.

Betty Aberlin's close readings of George MacDonald's verses and her thoughtful responses to them speak clearly of her poetic gifts and spiritual intelligence.
Luci Shaw, poet

George MacDonald: Literary Heritage and Heirs
Roderick McGillis, editor

This latest collection of 14 essays sets a new standard that will influence MacDonald studies for many more years. George MacDonald experts are increasingly evaluating his entire corpus within the nineteenth century context.

This comprehensive collection represents the best of contemporary scholarship on George MacDonald.
Rolland Hein, author of *George MacDonald: Victorian Mythmaker*

In the Near Loss of Everything: George MacDonald's Son in America
Dale Wayne Slusser

In the summer of 1887, George MacDonald's son Ronald, newly engaged to artist Louise Blandy, sailed from England to America to teach school. The next summer he returned to England to marry Louise and bring her back to America. On August 27, 1890, Louise died leaving him with an infant daughter. Ronald once described losing a beloved spouse as "the near loss of everything". Dale Wayne Slusser unfolds this poignant story with unpublished letters and photos that give readers a glimpse into the close-knit MacDonald family. Also included is Ronald's essay about his father, *George MacDonald: A Personal Note*, plus a selection from Ronald's 1922 fable, *The Laughing Elf*, about the necessity of both sorrow and joy in life.

A Novel Pulpit: Sermons From George MacDonald's Fiction
David L. Neuhouser

Each of the sermons has an introduction giving some explanation of the setting of the sermon or of the plot, if that is necessary for understanding the sermon. *"MacDonald's novels are both stimulating and thought-provoking. This collection of sermons from ten novels serve to bring out the 'freshness and brilliance' of MacDonald's message." from the author's introduction*

Behind the Back of the North Wind: Essays on George MacDonald's Classic Book
Edited and with Introduction by John Pennington and Roderick McGillis

The unique blend of fairy tale atmosphere and social realism in this novel laid the groundwork for modern fantasy literature. Sixteen essays by various authors are accompanied by an instructive introduction, extensive index, and beautiful illustrations.

Through the Year with George MacDonald: 366 Daily Readings
Rolland Hein, editor

These page-length excerpts from sermons, novels and letters are given an appropriate theme/heading and a complementary Scripture passage for daily reading. An inspiring introduction to the artistic soul and Christian vision of George MacDonald.

Shadows and Chivalry: C. S. Lewis and George MacDonald on Suffering, Evil, and Death
Jeff McInnis

Shadows and Chivalry studies the influence of George MacDonald, a nineteenth-century Scottish novelist and fantasy writer, upon one of the most influential writers of modern times, C. S. Lewis—the creator of Narnia, literary critic, and best-selling apologist. This study attempts to trace the overall affect of MacDonald's work on Lewis's thought and imagination. Without ever ceasing to be a story of one man's influence upon another, the study also serves as an exploration of each writer's thought on, and literary visions of, good and evil.

POETS AND POETRY

In the Eye of the Beholder: How to See the World Like a Romantic Poet
Louis Markos

Born out of the French Revolution and its radical faith that a nation could be shaped and altered by the dreams and visions of its people, British Romantic Poetry was founded on a belief that the objects and realities of our world, whether natural or human, are not fixed in stone but can be molded and transformed by the visionary eye of the poet. A separate bibliographical essay is provided for readers listing accessible biographies of each poet and critical studies of their work.

The Cat on the Catamaran: A Christmas Tale
John Martin

Here is a modern-day parable of a modern-day cat with modern-day attitudes. Riverboat Dan is a "cool" cat on a perpetual vacation from responsibility. He's *The Cat on the Catamaran* – sailing down the river of life. Dan keeps his guilty conscience from interfering with his fun until he runs into trouble. But will he have the courage to believe that it's never too late to change course? (For ages 10 to adult)

POP CULTURE

To Love Another Person: A Spiritual Journey Through Les Miserables
John Morrison

The powerful story of Jean Valjean's redemption is beloved by readers and theater goers everywhere. In this companion and guide to Victor Hugo's masterpiece, author John Morrison unfolds the spiritual depth and breadth of this classic novel and broadway musical.

Through Common Things: Philosophical Reflections on Popular Culture
Adam Barkman

"Barkman presents us with an amazingly wide-ranging collection of philosophical reflections grounded in the everyday things of popular culture – past and present, eastern and western, factual and fictional. Throughout his encounters with often surprising subject-matter (the value of darkness?), he writes clearly and concisely, moving seamlessly between Aristotle and anime, Lord Buddha and Lord Voldemort… . This is an informative and entertaining book to read!"

Doug Bloomberg, Professor of Philosophy, Institute for Christian Studies

Spotlight:
A Close-up Look at the Artistry and Meaning of Stephenie Meyer's Twilight Novels
John Granger

Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* saga has taken the world by storm. But is there more to *Twilight* than a love story for teen girls crossed with a cheesy vampire-werewolf drama? *Spotlight* reveals the literary backdrop, themes, artistry, and meaning of the four Bella Swan adventures. *Spotlight* is the perfect gift for serious *Twilight* readers.

The Many Faces of Katniss Everdeen: Exploring the Heroine of The Hunger Games
Valerie Estelle Frankel

Katniss is the heroine who's changed the world. Like Harry Potter, she explodes across genres: She is a dystopian heroine, a warrior woman, a reality TV star, a rebellious adolescent. She's surrounded by the figures of Roman history, from Caesar and Cato to Cinna and Coriolanus Snow. She's also traveling the classic heroine's journey. As a child soldier, she faces trauma; as a growing teen, she battles through love triangles and the struggle to be good in a harsh world. This book explores all this and more, while taking a look at the series' symbolism, from food to storytelling, to show how Katniss becomes the greatest power of Panem, the girl on fire.

Myths and Motifs of The Mortal Instruments
Valerie Estelle Frankel
With vampires, fairies, angels, romance, steampunk, and modern New York all in one series of books, Cassandra Clare is exploding onto the scene. This book explores the deeper world of the Shadowhunters. There's something for everyone, as this book reveals unseen lore within the bestselling series.

Virtuous Worlds: The Video Gamer's Guide to Spiritual Truth
John Stanifer

Popular titles like *Halo 3* and *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess* fly off shelves at a mind-blowing rate. John Stanifer, an avid gamer, shows readers specific parallels between Christian faith and the content of their favorite games. Written with wry humor (including a heckler who frequently pokes fun at the author) this book will appeal to gamers and non-gamers alike. Those unfamiliar with video games may be pleasantly surprised to find that many elements in those "virtual worlds" also qualify them as "virtuous worlds."

BIOGRAPHY

Sheldon Vanauken: The Man Who Received "A Severe Mercy"
Will Vaus

In this biography we discover: Vanauken the struggling student, the bon-vivant lover, the sailor who witnessed the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the seeker who returned to faith through C. S. Lewis, the beloved professor of English literature and history, the feminist and anti-war activist who participated in the March on the Pentagon, the bestselling author, and Vanauken the convert to Catholicism. What emerges is the portrait of a man relentlessly in search of beauty, love, and truth, a man who believed that, in the end, he found all three.

"This is a charming biography about a doubly charming man who wrote a triply charming book. It is a great way to meet the man behind A Severe Mercy."

Peter Kreeft, author of *Jacob's Ladder: 10 Steps to Truth*

Remembering Roy Campbell: The Memoirs of his Daughters, Anna and Tess
Introduction by Judith Lütge Coullie, Editor
Preface by Joseph Pearce

Anna and Teresa Campbell were the daughters of the handsome young South African poet and writer, Roy Campbell (1901-1957), and his beautiful English wife, Mary Garman. In their frank and moving memoirs, Anna and Tess recall the extraordinary, and often very difficult, lives they shared with their exceptional parents. Over 50 photos, 344 footnotes, timeline of Campbell's life, and complete index.

HARRY POTTER

The Order of Harry Potter: The Literary Skill of the Hogwarts Epic
Colin Manlove

Colin Manlove, a popular conference speaker and author of over a dozen books, has earned an international reputation as an expert on fantasy and children's literature. His book, *From Alice to Harry Potter*, is a survey of 400 English fantasy books. In *The Order of Harry Potter*, he compares and contrasts *Harry Potter* with works by "Inklings" writers J.R.R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis and Charles Williams; he also examines Rowling's treatment of the topic of imagination; her skill in organization and the use of language; and the book's underlying motifs and themes.

Harry Potter & Imagination: The Way Between Two Worlds
Travis Prinzi

Imaginative literature places a reader between two worlds: the story world and the world of daily life, and challenges the reader to imagine and to act for a better world. Starting with discussion of Harry Potter's more important themes, *Harry Potter & Imagination* takes readers on a journey through the transformative power of those themes for both the individual and for culture by placing Rowling's series in its literary, historical, and cultural contexts.

Hog's Head Conversations: Essays on Harry Potter
Travis Prinzi, Editor

Ten fascinating essays on Harry Potter by popular Potter writers and speakers including John Granger, James W. Thomas, Colin Manlove, and Travis Prinzi.

Repotting Harry Potter: A Professor's Guide for the Serious Re-Reader
Rowling Revisited: Return Trips to Harry, Fantastic Beasts, Quidditch, & Beedle the Bard
Dr. James W. Thomas

In *Repotting Harry Potter* and his sequel book *Rowling Revisited*, Dr. James W. Thomas points out the humor, puns, foreshadowing and literary parallels in the Potter books. In *Rowling Revisted*, readers will especially find useful three extensive appendixes – "Fantastic Beasts and the Pages Where You'll Find Them," "Quidditch Through the Pages," and "The Books in the Potter Books." Dr. Thomas makes re-reading the Potter books even more rewarding and enjoyable.

Deathly Hallows Lectures: The Hogwarts Professor Explains Harry's Final Adventure
John Granger

In *The Deathly Hallows Lectures,* John Granger reveals the finale's brilliant details, themes, and meanings. *Harry Potter* fans will be surprised by and delighted with Granger's explanations of the three dimensions of meaning in *Deathly Hallows*. Ms. Rowling has said that alchemy sets the "parameters of magic" in the series; after reading the chapter-length explanation of *Deathly Hallows* as the final stage of the alchemical Great Work, the serious reader will understand how important literary alchemy is in understanding Rowling's artistry and accomplishment.

Unlocking Harry Potter: Five Keys for the Serious Reader
John Granger

"I got so hooked I had to stop everything else I was doing and just read, read, read. I carried it around the house, read it while using the excercycle, I hid in rooms away from the daily life so I could take it all in. A spectacular read for all serious fans of Rowling's works. Compelling, well-argued, fun, and funny. Engaging. Thought provoking. Erudite."

Tom Morris
author of *If Harry Potter Ran General Electric*
Chairman of the Morris Institute for Human Values

Sociology and Harry Potter: 22 Enchanting Essays on the Wizarding World
Jenn Simms, Editor

Modeled on an Introduction to Sociology textbook, this book is not simply about the series, but also uses the series to facilitate the reader's understanding of the discipline of sociology and a develops a sociological approach to viewing social reality. It is a case of high quality academic scholarship written in a form and on a topic accessible to non-academics. As such, it is written to appeal to Harry Potter fans and the general reading public. Contributors include professional sociologists from eight countries.

Harry Potter, Still Recruiting: An Inner Look at Harry Potter Fandom
Valerie Frankel

The Harry Potter phenomenon has created a new world: one of Quidditch in the park, lightning earrings, endless parodies, a new genre of music, and fan conferences of epic proportions. This book attempts to document everything - exploring costuming, crafting, gaming, and more, with essays and interviews straight from the multitude of creators. From children to adults, fans are delighting the world with an explosion of captivating activities and experiences, all based on Rowling's delightful series.

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Phantastes was a groundbreaking book in 1858 and continues to be a seminal example of great fantasy literature. Its elusive meaning is both alluring and perplexing, inviting readers to experience a range of deep feelings and a sense of profound truth. This annotated edition, by two renowned MacDonald scholars, provides a wealth of information to better understand and enjoy this masterpiece. In addition to the text, there are 184 pages containing an authoritative introduction, life chronology, textual notes, book reviews, and comparative source materials. With 354 footnotes to explain obscure words and literary references, this enhanced edition will benefit any reader and will provide a solid foundation for future scholarship.

> *By placing* Phantastes *within older and wider British and Continental literary traditions and by establishing this text's affinities with the iconography of artists such as William Blake, the editors enrich our sense of George MacDonald's influential promotion of a supra-reality best discerned by "poetic and childlike" minds.*
>
> U. C. Knoepflmacher, Author of Ventures in Childland: Victorians, Fairy Tales, and Femininity

> *A good critical edition of George MacDonald's* Phantastes *has long been needed, and now we have it. This fine, comprehensive edition provides an accessible and illuminating introduction to this profound work.*
>
> Colin Manlove, Author of Scotland's Forgotten Treasure: The Visionary Novels of George MacDonald

> *Any serious reader of* Phantastes *will find this edition to deepen his or her*
> *derstanding and enjoyment of MacDonald's fantasy masterpiece, and MacDon*
> *scholars will find it an invaluable resource.*
>
> Bonnie Gaarden, Author of The Christian Godde
> Archetype and Theology in the Fantasies of Geor
> MacDonald

John Pennington, professor of English at St. Norbert College, special
Victorian fairy tales and is the editor of North Wind: The Journal of
MacDonald Studies.

Roderick McGillis, emeritus professor of English at University of Calga
written widely on MacDonald and edited several essay collections of George MacDonald scholarship.

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